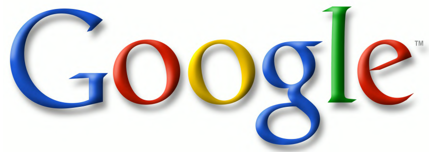

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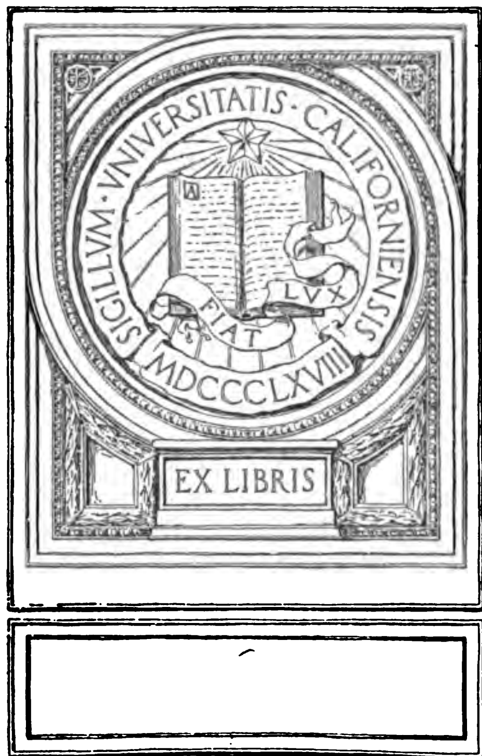
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Arthur George Heath

NEW YORK AGENTS

LONGMANS, GREEN & Co.

FOURTH AVENUE AND 30TH STREET

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Letters of Arthur George Heath

Fellow of New College, Oxford, and
Lieutenant in the 6th Batt. Royal West Kent Regt.

With

Memoir by Gilbert Murray

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Oxford
B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET
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TO A. G. H.

It seems so long ago
Since in that musty Flemish lumber-room
You made such music flow
With master hand, as charmed away our gloom,
Drawing from battered, broken keys
And rusty wires such harmonies
That we forgot war and the shadow of death
And caught our breath
To hear the hurrying clamour of your themes.
So long ago it seems!

So long ago! and now
Your sun is set; but in our memory gleams
Like some fair after-glow
The image of those haunting magic themes.
And as our faltering hands essay
What you so passionately would play,
Far off we hear your music echoing yet;
And we forget
That you are silent for us, save in dreams.
So long ago it seems!

J. S. Mann.

NOTE

AFTER the death of our dear son, one of his intimate friends wrote 'If you could let me have any letters, it would be a comfort, as it were, to hear a few more words of his voice.' The present volume is the outcome of this and other suggestions. The letters date back to August 1914, when he joined the army. For the most part they are letters home, but a few friends have kindly permitted us to print some addressed to them. Some of the letters were undated, and for these the month has been inserted from recollection or internal evidence.

We are indebted to the authorities of New College for permission to use their arms as a mark of our son's connection with the College and his love for it.

Professor Gilbert Murray has laid us under

deep obligation by writing the memoir which precedes the letters.

We dedicate this book to the undying memory of that noble band of Oxford men who shared our son's enthusiasm for social progress and his ardent desire to serve his fellow men, and who, at their country's call, cheerfully gave their all and died in her service.

G. H. H.
E. M. H.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

ARTHUR GEORGE HEATH

MEMOIR.

THERE are perhaps no institutions in England whose response to the requirements of the war has been more swift, or whose sacrifice more intense and enduring, than the two ancient Universities. Not, indeed, that it is very profitable to measure the comparative sacrifices of those who give their all. If these two Mothers gave without hesitation, so of course did many others. But these two had, in the nature of things, a gift to offer which strikes the onlooker as richer than most, more brilliant, more pathetic, more inevitably suggesting the idea, by all worldly standards, of incalculable and heroic waste.

Men of many kinds and many different natures have gone out of Oxford, to return thither only as a memory and an inscribed

stone. But perhaps the two classes that have most touched the imagination are those who stand, from the academic point of view, at the extremities of the scale. On one side the more or less idle and wealthy men to whom the University had been something nearer to an athletic or social club than a place of study, and whose lives had often seemed to be little more than an expression of irresponsible youth, if not a mere selfish pursuit of pleasure.

It was a surprise to many of us to see how, when the need came, there was found in these men an unsuspected strenuousness and gravity. The power, it would seem, had always been there; but to call it forth needed a stronger stimulus than the ordinary motives of well-to-do English life. And many an Oxford teacher must have begun to revise his general estimate of human nature when he heard the later history of various undergraduates over whom he had hitherto shrugged despairing shoulders; what hardships they faced without a murmur, what care they took of their men's health and comfort, how they had shown themselves capable, not only of dying gallantly, but of shouldering grave and incessant responsibilities without a lapse.

And at the other end of the scale were men almost the opposite in character: students selected from all the schools of the kingdom for their intellectual powers, men whose ideals of life were gentle, to whom Oxford was above all things a place of study and meditation, where they could live again through the great thoughts of past generations and draw from them light for the understanding of truth or help for the bettering of human life in the future.

These men, unlike the first, were accustomed normally to live for their duty, and their duty hitherto had lain along quiet and rather austere paths. It had led them towards industry and idealism and the things of the intellect; also no doubt towards the ordinary habits of manliness and good temper which make life in a community pleasant. Those of them especially who had joined the tutorial staff of some college had it as a large part of their daily business to think for others, to practise constant sympathy and understanding, to be the friend of every pupil who came to them, and to have no enemies.

And on these men there fell suddenly a new duty; the same as the old, perhaps, in its

ultimate justification, but certainly in its concrete expression the most violent opposite of all they had hitherto thought right. They were called abruptly to a life in which their old attainments and virtues, as it seemed, were not wanted, their standard of manners somewhat out of place, their gentleness and modesty almost a positive disqualification; while activities were suddenly demanded of them which they had never practised and which, for all anyone knew, might be entirely foreign to their natures. And here, too, there came to the onlooker a somewhat awed surprise, to see how the same inward power which had shaped these men's previous lives was ready for its new task. They adapted themselves. They found how to use their brains in a field that was strange to them. They learnt to command instead of persuading or suggesting, but still turned their experience in handling pupils and classes to advantage for the leading and shaping of their platoons. They proved themselves able to endure fatigues and dangers outside all the range of their previous imagination, and even, what must to many have been a more profoundly hateful task, to study carefully how to inflict the maximum of injury upon

the men in the trenches opposite. They would never in normal life have been soldiers, yet they brought some great gifts to their soldiering. After all, there are very few fields of life where a keen intelligence is not apt to be useful, or where habits of duty and sympathy and understanding are not very valuable things.

It was to this class that Arthur Heath most typically belonged; and in trying to write of him one feels how much easier it would be to describe a man of the other type. The other type makes such an obvious picture; the young man who 'cuts' his lectures and is misunderstood by his dons, who neglects his mere books because his heart is in romance or adventure or thoughts of war; the man of dominant will and stormy passions, or of reckless daring and happy-go-lucky lawlessness, who is always in trouble till he rises to the call of need and becomes a hero. The Idle Apprentice always forms a better picture than the Industrious Apprentice, and his life is more interesting to read.

To make a man's story clear one needs achievements, and to describe him vividly one seems to need some characteristic weaknesses. But the men of whom I write were very young,

and had lived so far a life with little external achievement, only the achievements of high thinking and feeling, of quiet tasks well done and generous duties well carried through: a life with plenty in it to command admiration and love, but nothing to make a story about. And as for characteristic weaknesses, I suppose these men had them, being human; but I should find it hard to name Arthur Heath's weaknesses, and they were certainly not picturesque enough to be remembered. One remembers these men by slight things; by a smile, a look of the eyes, a way of sitting or walking; by a sudden feeling about some chance incident —'I should like to talk that over with Heath,' or 'How Heath would have laughed at that!' But such things can hardly be communicated, any more than the sense of loss or loneliness can. One can only say: these young men were beautiful spirits and of high promise; they lived a sheltered though strenuous life, partly devoted to high intellectual studies and ideal interests, partly to that borderland of social work in which hard thinking and brotherly love go hand in hand; then, when the call came, they stepped instantly out into a world of noise and mire, worked and laughed and suffered with

their fellow men, and, like them, died for their country.

A slight story in any case, and in Arthur Heath's perhaps slighter than in most. The mere annals of his life have comparatively little interest. As is said by one who knew him especially well, they are summed up in the phrase, 'Like boy, like man.' It is a singularly uniform story of quiet industry and strength, a very gentle affectionate and modest nature, extraordinary powers of intellect and a rather individual but irrepressible sense of humour.

He was born in London on October 8th, 1887, and was educated at the Grocers' Company's School, of which he always spoke very highly, and which certainly seems to have had the power of turning out thoughtful men. He rose through the various forms with surprising rapidity, excelling at almost everything he touched. He was very good at such sports as running, swimming, and shooting; he delighted in natural scenery and country walks, and he showed an especial gift for music. In December, 1904, he obtained an Open Classical Scholarship at New College, Oxford, and came into residence in October of the next year. It so happened that I had just returned to Oxford

and New College myself that term, after an absence of sixteen years, and was told, I remember, that I should have two particularly good pupils to teach—the senior Winchester Scholar, Leslie Hunter, and the Open Scholar, Heath, from some London school. They both abundantly justified the description. They ran each other close for the great University distinctions, remained friends and colleagues, and died not very far apart on the Western Front.

I remember finding Heath waiting in my study, a slender, delicately-made freshman, very young-looking, dark, with regular features and great luminous eyes; rather silent and entirely gentle and unassuming. A freshman from a London school is apt to be a little 'out of it' at first; he is surrounded by boys from Winchester, Eton, Rugby and the other great public schools, who have old schoolfellows by the score scattered about the University, and whose ordinary habits and manners, virtues and weaknesses, form the average standard of the place. Heath's gentleness immediately inclined most people to like him, while his brains obviously commanded respect; but he was always reserved and did not quickly become well-known in College. He struck one in his

first terms as living an intense inner life of watching and thinking, observing and weighing, and making up his mind quietly on a multitude of subjects, while quite refusing to be bullied or hurried. He had not had as much training in Greek and Latin Composition as the best boys from the great schools, a fact which just prevented him from getting the two Blue-ribbons of scholarship, the Hertford and Ireland. But he came second for both, and obtained a Craven Scholarship in 1906, a First Class in Moderations in 1907 and in Greats in 1909, after which he was immediately elected a Fellow of New College.

Before settling down to his teaching work he travelled for a year in France and Germany, attending the Universities of Paris and Berlin, and visiting Leipzig, Munich, Heidelberg, and other places. His chief interests at this time, apart from music, were philosophy and social reform. He had expected much from the French socialists and the German philosophers, and his letters to me seem to show that both expectations were disappointed. His accounts of the struggles of advanced French politicians are more amusing than respectful, and he could not find the relief and edification that Jean

Christophe found in the religious enthusiasm of the votaries of violence. On the other hand he conceived both respect and warm affection for individual Frenchmen; he was keenly interested in the theatres, and greatly admired the work of certain French philosophers. In Germany his experience was similar to that of so many English students. He was disappointed in the teaching of the Universities, though he rather admired the actual lecturing. He was quite surprised at what seemed to him the decadence of German philosophy. He thought that its highly professional and technical character led its professors to multiply systems and interest themselves in system-building rather than to look freshly at the facts they had to study; and that quite often some criticism of indurated error which had come to be a commonplace in Oxford was unsuspected or hailed as a new discovery in the German schools. He was amused, too, and somewhat bored at the self-conscious insistence on German 'Kultur,' with which his ears were inundated; the word was still unfamiliar to most Englishmen at that time. And he wrote me a serious and perturbed warning, as to a fellow friend of peace, about the anger against

England and the inclination towards war which he found widespread in Germany. Neither he nor I, he considered, had at all realized the strength of these feelings. On the other hand he was favourably impressed by the strength and discipline of the German Socialists, especially in the south, and the general reasonableness of their political action. He had always loved German music, and he revelled in the mediaeval towns and the vestiges of the simple life of old Germany.

When he returned to Oxford he took up his regular work as a Greats tutor, lecturing mostly on modern philosophy, especially on various branches of political speculation. He took, on the one hand, such subjects as 'Sensation, Imagery and Thought' and 'The Psychological Account of Knowledge'; and, on the other, 'Laissez Faire.' 'Modern Socialism,' 'Socialist Criticisms and Socialist Remedies.' During these four years he was building up a great position of quiet influence as a tutor. Good pupils are apt to repay richly whatever effort a tutor spends upon them, but I have seldom heard such warm language of friendship and admiration as from certain of Heath's pupils when they talked about him.

It is curious to notice that, at this time, when his work was so strikingly successful and his ship had been happily brought to port, he began, for the first time in my knowledge of him, to be uneasy and discontented. It is a phenomenon often visible in the best of the young tutors at Oxford, and is connected with the very quality which makes them inspiring as teachers. It is not that they do not enjoy their work and their pupils. They do both. But their interests overflow the bounds of their activities. They pine for a field of work with more life in it, a wider outlook and more prospect of effectiveness, a horizon less limited by examinations and routine and the constant training of undeveloped minds. Still more, perhaps, it is the moral trouble that besets all purely intellectual workers, the difficulty of maintaining faith in the value of your own work. Even if Heath had been able to know what his pupils and colleagues thought of him and said of him among themselves, he would probably have suspected that they were merely exaggerating. But of course, as a rule, men do not hear these things. Friends cannot openly pay one another compliments.

To Heath, so far as he discussed the matter

with me, no definite alternative really presented itself. His life was very varied in its interests. Besides his personal studies and the work with his pupils, he derived intense pleasure from his piano, and took an active part in the musical life at Oxford. He would often go out to one of the Oxfordshire villages and play classical music to the village people. He was also, during his last two years of residence, one of the University members on the Board of Guardians, where his care and good judgment were greatly valued, and the contact with practical life and concrete economic problems opened to him a new vista of interest. He refused to stand for a certain provincial professorship, which would have given him a larger income and more leisure, coupled with less congenial work and less advanced pupils. At one time he hankered after the profession of Medicine, the one form of intellectual work whose utility is as plain as a pikestaff. Sometimes, again, he rebelled at the idea of always teaching men who had such abundance of good teaching already, and wished to devote himself entirely to the 'W.E.A.'

This society, whose initials stand for

'*Workers Educational Association*,' has exercised a great fascination over the best minds of Oxford for the last ten years or so. Wherever a class of working men chose to gather together and ask for a trained University graduate to teach them and to read and discuss their essays, the organization tried to provide an Oxford or Cambridge man, and as a matter of fact usually managed to send one of the best and most invigorating of the younger teachers in the place. Most of the classes were conducted in the town where the working men happened to live, but arrangements were also made by which picked men came to Oxford. The success of the movement, from an educational point of view, has been nothing less than extraordinary; and, considering the miserable pay and the discomforts of the teacher's life, the devotion with which dozens of brilliant young men have thrown themselves into the tutorial work has been a credit to human nature.

One of Heath's W.E.A. pupils, a member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, wrote to a friend: 'It was Mr. Heath's influence in our talks together (more especially in Oxford) on philosophy that had a most profound effect, I hope for good, on my character, but at any

rate on my course of life, opinions and actions. Nothing I know of has had so much effect, and on the whole brought so much real happiness . . . I almost loved that man, so you will forgive the tone of this letter if it appears strange.'

Early in 1914 his friends were surprised to see the announcement that Heath had been awarded the Green Moral Philosophy Prize for a treatise on 'Personality'; the book will, I hope, be published at the end of the war. He had not told most of his friends that he was writing at all; and I remember that some of us amused ourselves by writing him pretended letters of congratulation from various celebrities who were popularly supposed to be guilty of 'personality' in their political speeches, and who offered or requested suggestions for its more effective use. He detected us, of course, and wrote to me shortly afterwards:

'It is my painful duty to inform you that the police have tracked to your house three letters which have recently been delivered to me containing illicit threats and improper comments on a question of public interest. Willingly as I acquit you of any personal share in the matter . . . it is not right that Innocence and Respectability—as found in my pupils and my scout—

should be exposed to even a remote chance of such contamination'—as these letters apparently contained. He threatened prosecution, but would be content if the criminals left the University.

I used during these years to see a great deal of him, and had the custom of lunching on Tuesdays, after a 12-o'clock lecture, with him and his colleague, G. L. Cheesman, a young historian. Cheesman knew all about the army of the Roman Empire, and the history of various separate legions, and had travelled in Dalmatia and the Balkans. He was a man of generous and brilliant mind, an inspiring and vivid personality. Cheesman loved argument, and Heath and I loved Cheesman. And we differed enough in opinion to keep up a constant guerilla warfare on all kinds of political and intellectual topics. In politics Cheesman affected the part of a wide-awake progressive Tory, while Heath and I were content to be dull old-fashioned Radicals. On other subjects, of course, the divisions were different.

I think it was on August 7th, 1914, three days after the declaration of war, when I had just returned from London, that I had a call on the

telephone from Heath, proposing himself to dinner, and telling me that he and Cheesman had both applied for commissions. The summons had come, and both men, so different in tastes and opinions, though alike in idealism, had responded to it together. They had taken about two days to think the matter thoroughly out. Heath came up to our house that evening, and one or two other men also. And we talked over the war, and Grey's speech, and the resistance of Liège; and the imminence of danger to France; and the relative strength of the British and German fleets; and then of our German friends and the times we had stayed in various parts of Germany. Later on Heath sat down to the piano and played French music, Hungarian music, and, lastly, German music, and the company sang German songs as a kind of farewell, and he and his friends walked back to college.

He went first to train at Churn, near Oxford. Then he obtained a commission in the sixth Battalion of the Royal West Kent Regiment, his home at this time being in Bromley, and joined his regiment at a swampy camp in the south-eastern counties, whose amusing discomforts and oddities he described in many

letters. 'No self-respecting cow,' I remember, 'would graze in such a place.' I refrain from mentioning the various camps where he was stationed, and the special forms of training he went through. It is enough that he became at last wearily impatient to go out to France. There were frequent rumours of a move; at one time hopes were roused by the prospect of a special inspection by a distinguished and corpulent veteran 'who is being moved to-morrow night by mechanical transport from E. . . . for that purpose.' He opined that 'Italy and Kitchener's Army will remain neutral till the end of the war.' One comfort was that 'Our Adjutant, in whom I have every confidence, informs us that within three months we shall all be knocked out.' This letter ends with a postscript: 'In the last stages of our twenty-seven mile march I heard one man ask another if there was a parade the next morning. "Yes," was the answer; "half-past-four. Top-hats and bathing drawers."'

At last, on May 31st, 1915, I received the following note:

'All military movements must be executed with profound secrecy, and known to no one except the population of Aldershot, the station-

masters on the southern lines, the British mercantile marine and the friends and relatives of the few thousand men concerned. Therefore all I can say to you at this crisis is *Vive la France! Vive l'Armée de Kitchener! Conspuez Northcliffe!*'

This cheery tone ran through almost all his letters, and was borne out by the vigorous gait and sun-browned skin which one saw on his occasional visits to Oxford. Military training improved his physical health and cheerfulness. He complained that his intellect had become dormant, but it was not so. He read a good deal and thought vigorously. He had at first, like all thoughtful Englishmen, a feeling of utter horror at the prospect of European War, and an uneasy suspicion that, however necessary it might be, now at the last moment, for England to fight, surely our policy for many years back must have been somewhere dreadfully at fault. The White Paper was the first thing to reassure him; then came the study of earlier questions; and in the end he felt confidence in the wisdom and good faith of British diplomacy since 1904, and conceived in particular a great admiration for Sir Edward Grey. 'It seems to me,' he wrote to me once in a time

of sorrow, 'that most people's chief consolation for the loss of their friends now is just the sense of the absolute rightness of what they have done and the way they died.'

Like a true soldier, he was always angry at what he considered to be slanders of the enemy. He detested atrocity-mongers, and for a time disbelieved the stories of German cruelties in Belgium. When the Bryce report was published and the evidence became too strong, he was convinced. But he never spoke of these subjects, and the only reference to them which I can find in his letters is a short and unexplained sentence: 'It seems that the Germans have taken to torturing their prisoners.' I think that with him, as with others who had joined the army at the same time, this 'sense of the absolute rightness of what they had done' became stronger as time passed. But, to the end, his letters find room for mockery at the anti-German mania of the more vulgar press, and the old ladies who knew on unimpeachable authority that this or that eminent and august person was a 'Potsdammer' or a convicted spy.

His campaigning in France lay through a period of discouragement to the British cause.

The Russians had met their great defeat on the Dunajec before he left England, and continued steadily to retreat during the whole period. This great disaster reacted upon our fortunes everywhere. The Gallipoli expedition, on which Heath had pinned his most confident hopes, first dragged and then slowly failed; the final disappointment at Suvla Bay took place on August 15th. On September 25th the great Allied offensive in Champagne and towards Loos began with terrific carnage and large success, but the losses were too severe and the difficulties ahead increased too fast to permit of the advance being continued. During September it had become more clear than ever that the Allies could not expect any armed help from America, and by the first weeks of October the Kings of Bulgaria and Greece had apparently made up their minds that our cause was safely lost. Venizelos was dismissed; Serbia betrayed by her ally and invaded by her enemies.

Meanwhile Heath's own health was not very good. He had an attack of some sort of blood-poisoning, which was at first taken for scarlet-fever. On July 21st he was wounded in the scalp by a splinter of shell, while resting in

billets, and insisted on returning to work before it was healed. He remained unwell for some time afterwards. Still he found a constant interest in the care of his platoon, and a great pleasure in the men's affection. His letters remain steadily cheerful. Discomforts, when mentioned at all, are always treated humorously. He describes one of his men who had just written an indignant letter about 'them shirkers at home' enjoying themselves, 'while we are bearing the blunt'; and explains that his own platoon at this moment is 'bearing the blunt' by lying in the sun asleep or playing cards in a beautiful rose-garden. Another time he has just been so bold as to give a clean shirt to a Major; 'rather like giving a bun to an elephant.' Graver misfortunes are met in the same way: 'The poor old Grand Duke seems to be well on his way to Nijni-Novgorod.' Now and again comes a sudden blaze of anger against the grousers and backbiters at home: 'What I should really like would be to go down Fleet Street with a machine-gun.' Just once or twice comes a sentence revealing, like a flash of light on an abyss, the true horror of the things he did not speak about: 'These are days when men should be born without mothers.'

Like nearly all thoughtful men he was often troubled beforehand by the doubt whether his courage and endurance would stand the strain of real war. However, at the very beginning he distinguished himself by a solitary scouting expedition in which he discovered a German listening post, and, later on, the only thing that seems to have disturbed him much was the nerve-racking effect of the gigantic artillery. He wished 'the great bullies of guns' would go away, and leave the infantry to settle the war in a nice clean manner. 'If I had my way I should bar out every weapon but the rifle; and even then,' he adds, 'I should prefer brickbats at three-quarters of a mile.' In the middle of August his most intimate friend in the Company, Saumarez Mann, was very badly wounded while cutting grass in front of the parapet. Mann was still an undergraduate at Balliol, and Heath's letters convey echoes of the chaff that passed between the two friends. 'Mann always makes me laugh; he is so big,' says one; while another orders with care a box of chocolates for Mann's twenty-first birthday. Fortunately Mann's wound proved not to be mortal. Early in September came a greater blow, the news of G. L. Cheesman's death at Gallipoli. There

was probably not a man in the army who was more vividly conscious than he of all that Constantinople meant in history or more thrilled by the prospect of fighting for its recovery.

At last, on October 8th, the end came. It was Heath's twenty-eighth birthday. The Battalion held a series of trenches in front of Vermelles, across the Hulluch road, in that stretch of ghastly and shell-tortured black-country which we now think of as the Loos Salient. For the whole day there had been an intense German bombardment, tearing and breaking the trenches, and presumably intended to lead up to a general infantry attack. It was decided, in order to prevent this plan developing, that the 6th Battalion should attempt an attack on the enemy at 'Gun Trench.' This was a very difficult enterprise in itself, and doubly so to troops already worn by a long and fierce bombardment. The charge was made by 'A' Company about 6.30 and beaten back. It was followed by a series of bombing attacks, for which a constant supply of bombs had to be kept up across the open. It was during this work that Arthur Heath fell, shot through the neck. He spoke once, to say, 'Don't trouble about me,' and died almost immediately.

The whole operation was finely carried out. It failed to take Gun Trench, but it seems to have paralysed the attacking power of the enemy. And the official Report states that the Commander 'considered that the 6th R.W. Kents and 7th E. Surrey showed fine military qualities in undertaking an attack after such a bombardment continued throughout the day.' As for Arthur Heath himself, his platoon sergeant wrote to his parents: 'It will console you to know that a braver man never existed. Some few minutes before he met his death I heard the exclamation: "What a man! I would follow him anywhere." These few words express the opinion of everyone who came into contact with him, and we all feel proud to have had the honour of serving under him.' Another friend, who knew him but slightly, wrote: 'I can only think of him as one who has left a track of light behind.'

Four New College scholars of exceptional intellect and character entered the University in 1905 and obtained Firsts in their Final Schools in 1909, Arthur Heath, Leslie Hunter, R. C. Woodhead and Philip Brown. And now all four lie buried on the Western front. Each of course had his special character and ways

and aims; but to one who knew them well there comes from all of them a certain uniform impression, the impression of an extraordinary and yet unconscious high-mindedness. It is not merely that they were clever, hard-working, conscientious, honourable, lovers of poetry and beauty; the sort of men who could never be suspected of evading a duty or, say, voting for their own interest rather than the common good. It was, I think, that the standards which had become the normal guides of life to them were as a matter of plain fact spiritual standards, and not of the world nor the flesh. The University of Oxford has doubtless a thousand faults, and the present writer would be the last to palliate them; but it has, by some strange secret of its own, preserved through many centuries the power of training in its best men a habit of living for the things of the spirit. Its philosophy is broad and always moving; it is rooted in no orthodoxy, and the chief guide of its greatest school is Hellenism, not scholasticism. Yet it keeps always living in generation after generation of its best students a tone of mind like that of some cassocked clerk of the Middle Ages, whose mental life would shape itself into two aims; in himself to glorify God

by the pursuit of knowledge, and among his fellow men to spread the spirit of Christ.

Such language may sound strained as applied to a group of men who were earning their livings amongst us in perfectly ordinary ways, as teachers, writers, doctors, civil servants, some of them in the law or in business; but it implies nothing strained or specially high-strung in the quality of their daily lives. There is always a religion of some sort at the root of every man's living. Every man is either willing or not willing to sacrifice himself to something which he feels to be higher than himself, though, if he is sensible, he will probably not talk much about it. And men of conscience and self-mastery are fully as human, as varied, and as interesting as any weaklings or picturesque scoundrels are.

Perhaps the first thing that struck one about Arthur Heath was his gentleness and modesty. 'It was fine,' says one of his superior officers at Churn camp, 'to see a first-rate intellect such as his applied to a practical matter that was strange to him. And he was so modest about himself, and never dreamed how we all admired him.' The last words strike one as exactly true. Another quality was his affectionateness,

or rather the large space that affection occupied is his mind. Affection indeed is too weak a term to describe the feeling that seems to glow behind the words of many of his letters home, for instance the beautiful letter to his mother, written on July 11th, about the prospect of death. He was a devoted son and brother, interested in every detail of home life, and not forgetting the family birthdays. And the same quality pervaded much of his relations towards friends and acquaintances. He was the sort of man whom people confide in, and consult in their troubles.

He was a bold thinker; he held clear opinions of his own on all sorts of subjects. He often differed from other people, especially from people in authority. Yet he was never for a moment bitter or conceited or anxious to contradict. There was no scorn about him; and his irrepressible sense of fun, so far from being unkind, had an element of positive affection in it.

In comparing him with other men who have fought and fallen in this war, I feel that one of his most marked characteristics was his instinct for understanding. In the midst of strong feeling and intense action his quiet, penetrating

intelligence was always at work. Even at the front, where most men become absorbed in their immediate job, he was full of strategical problems, of the war as a whole and the effect of one part of it on another, of home politics, and the influences he believed to be baneful or salutary. His courage was like that of the Brave Man in Aristotle, who knows that a danger is dangerous, and fears it, but goes through with it because he knows that he ought. He liked to understand what he was doing. He was ready of course to obey without question, but he would then know that he was obeying without question. He was ready to give his life and all the things that he valued in life, his reading and music and philosophy, but he liked to know what he was giving them for. After a study of the causes of the war, he writes from France: 'One of the few things in all these intrigues and ambitions that can be considered with pleasure is the character of Sir Edward Grey. . . . I am very puzzled about home politics; cannot understand the Welsh miners or the coalition, and feel all convictions shaken except a profound belief in Mr. Asquith.'

After his first wound: 'Fear is a very odd thing. When I was up in the trenches about

30 yards from them (the enemy) I got over the parapet and crawled out to examine a mine-crater without anything worse than a certain amount of excitement. But when we are back here (in Brigade Reserve) and the shells start screaming over, I feel thoroughly afraid, and there is no denying it.' A superior officer once warned him not to think so highly of his men: he should accept it as a fact that 'these men are damned stupid, and what's more, they're not anxious to do more than they can help.' Heath bowed to the officer's superior knowledge; yet he did think he found in even the less promising men a certain intelligence and keenness: 'In fact I am like the man who tried to be a philosopher but found that cheerfulness *would* break in.'

He never groused about hardships, nor yet about the evils of war. The war was something he had to carry through, and he would make the best of it until it killed him. He realized the horror of a war of attrition, and the true nature of these days when 'men should be born without mothers.' Yet he took considerable interest in numerical calculations about the length of time that would be necessary, at the existing rate of wastage, to make the German

line untenable. And his calculations always pointed towards the certainty of our ultimate victory. When a phrase of poignant pathos occurs in the letters it is never by his own intention. Thus in speaking of some particular operation of trench warfare he writes: 'Gillespie taught it to me, and now I am teaching it to Geoffrey Smith.' Gillespie, Heath, Geoffrey Smith; it was in that order, too, that they taught one another a greater lesson. A. D. Gillespie died a brave death in September, 1915, Heath in October of the same year, and Geoffrey Smith in the July following. But the full tragedy underlying the words can only be realized by one who knew those three rare spirits.

A wonderful band of scholars it was that went out in these days from William of Wykeham's old foundation, young men quite exceptional in intellectual powers, in feeling for the higher values of life, in the sense of *Noblesse Oblige* and in loving-kindness towards the world of men. The delicate feeling which forms the foundation of scholarship was in them not a mere function of the intellect, but a grace pervading all their human relations. No grossness or graspingness ever found a foothold in

them, no germ of that hate which rejoices to believe evil and to involve good things with bad. Heath played his beloved German music the night before he left Oxford. Cheesman's latest letter to me was a defence of the Turks in Gallipoli from some misconception which he thought was in my mind. Woodhead, waiting to advance under machine-gun fire and knowing that the first man to rise would be a certain victim, chose carefully the right moment and rose first. The only words that Philip Brown spoke after he was mortally wounded were words of thought and praise for his servant. Leslie Hunter, on the day before he died, spoke to a friend of his presentiment that death was coming, and then lay for a while in a grassy meadow, singing '*Im wunderschönen Monat Mai.*'

While I was writing these lines came the news of another of the band, a most brilliant young scholar and historian, Leonard Butler, together with his Colonel's statement in the *Times* notice: 'I never saw a finer death.' And this morning, as I revise them, yet another: not indeed a member of this group, since he was older and had already achieved fame on a wider field of action, but one whom

I think of still as a young Wykehamist undergraduate and Ireland Scholar, by nature and fortune perhaps the most richly gifted of all, and as swift as any to give up to the cause that summoned him all the shining promise of his life, Raymond Asquith.

One after another, a sacrifice greater than can be counted, they go; and will go until the due end is won.

At the close of the Michaelmas Term of 1914 there was a memorial service at New College, as in other Colleges, for those of its members who had fallen in the war. It seemed a long list even then, though it was scarcely at its beginning. And those who attended the service will not forget the sight of the white-haired Warden, full of blameless years, kneeling before the altar on the bare stones, and praying that it might be granted to us, the survivors, to live such lives as these young men who had gone before us. His words interpreted, I think, the unconscious feeling of most of those who heard him. It certainly changes the whole aspect of the world, even to a man whose life is advanced and his character somewhat set, when the men who were his intimate friends are proved to have had in them, not merely the

ordinary virtues and pleasantnesses of common life, but something high and resplendent which one associates with the stories of old saints or heroes; still more when there is burned into him the unforgettable knowledge that men whom he loved have died for him.

GILBERT MURRAY.

LETTERS

OXFORD,
20th August, 1914.

TO-DAY'S BULLETIN.

Mr. A. G. Heath has been before the Board recommending for commissions. They gave few signs whether he was likely to get his job or not, but from private inquiries he is not hopeful. The only thing that pleases him is that he was passed as fit by a medical officer who really examined his candidates—at least five minutes each—and did not merely ask whether they were well. He expects to join his large circle of depreciators early next week or possibly on Saturday of this. It was very necessary to come up as without these forms and examinations his application

'Was null, was nought, silence implying sound,'

whereas now, if his country refuses his services,

it will be with her eyes open and a plain warning in her ears. He may visit various dependants in London to make other arrangements or inquiries. But, on the whole, he believes his time here to be strictly limited.

NEW COLLEGE,
August, 1914.

MY DEAR PHILIP,*

So sorry. I wasn't there and your card has only just reached me. I have been taken after all for Kitchener's Army. I go off to a training camp at Churn for a month or six weeks; after that I have to attach myself to some regiment. It grieves me that we shall not be together at Aysgarth. But there is nothing for it. R.V.L. has firmly condemned the whole project,† but orders me once in to stay in the Army

* Philip Anthony Brown, formerly Scholar of New College, Lieut. in the Durham Light Infantry, killed in action, November 4th, 1915.

† This objection was based solely on the belief that Arthur Heath's powers would not find proper scope as a subaltern. The friend alluded to wrote saying that to use such a man as a subaltern was economically equivalent to using the *Lusitania* to carry a pound of butter from Ramsgate to Margate.

till I'm a Field-Marshal. Personally, I expect to be sacked in a week. In that case we may after all get our reading party. Otherwise I shall think of you from afar getting fresh lurid sidelights on the medical profession from Oliver Gotch. One thing I'm keen on. W.E.A. branches could arrange meetings about the war, where really competent people might lecture, not National Service League fanatics. Seton Watson, *e.g.*, was at the Summer School here and jolly good. Barker I find anxious to lecture in his own county, Lancashire, if he could get the chance. I really think it is worth doing, and I've written to Zimmern, Temple, Price and Cartwright about it. Won't you lend your influence? Military prospects have kept me from further inquiries into civilian work suitable for you and me such as we were discussing a fortnight ago. But I really do think the W.E.A. should do something to satisfy public curiosity about the war and the politics that led up to it.

I'm hurried and can do nothing more than send you my love.

Yours,

A. G. H.

You see that Ginger* and Chug† have also been taken for Kitchener's Army?

30th August, 1914.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I'm glad Tom‡ feels better, and am very glad that he has gone with Maurice Campbell§. We have had a quiet day and are getting ready for a heavy week. There are crowds of cavalry about the camping ground now, on their way through to Egypt, it is believed, to release the garrison there, and some of the Hon. Artillery Company's batteries. Still we are not yet very crowded. There was Church Parade this morning, with a sermon from the Vice-Chancellor, who came over specially for that purpose.

* G. H. Gater, Commoner of New College, 1905—1909, Lieut.-Colonel commanding a Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment, D.S.O.

† G. L. Cheesman, Fellow of New College, Lieut. in the Hampshire Regiment, killed in action, August 10th, 1915.

‡ His younger brother.

§ Lieut. J. M. H. Campbell, R.A.M.C. Formerly Scholar of New College.

Make the most of your last few days (at Nevin). There are no difficulties about my room (at Oxford) and there will be no need for you to move anything, though I am much obliged for your offer. The piano is being sent back.

Love from

ARTHUR.

September, 1914.

MY DEAR MURRAY,*

It was a great pleasure to get your letter. I have been a week here, which feels more like a month. My letters are all kept back and yours was the first word almost that I've had from the civilised world for some time. No, I'm not insulted by your supposing the Scottish Borderers to be a more famous regiment than my own. The Scotch are an overrated nation anyway. What I really envy Denniston is his position. Aldershot is moorland or commons, I suppose.

This is a marsh by the Thames, intersected by canals, protected by a dyke that blocks the view of the river (though not of the sails on it),

* Professor Gilbert Murray.

and covering a bog. No respectable cow would graze in such a place. The shipping is the only thing to look at, and that can only be seen once a week, for our programme is too heavy at all other times. But, thanks to the river mists and the general discomfort of the place, we shall soon be disease proof—enteric, dysentery, rheumatic fever and pneumonia will have done their best by March next, and those of us who survive will be equal to anything the German climate can provide.

That finishes my grumble. There's so much about this new Army I'd like to tell you that I shall never get it finished. You'd probably like to hear about the men. Well, they're not the 'flower of English manhood' or, if they are, I pity the weeds. But the regular officers think them better than ordinary recruits, and they really are showing considerable keenness.

A full eight hours a day on parade is double the ordinary recruits' course, and they are living of course in much less comfortable ways than if they were in barracks. But there is only a small percentage of the men who are not throwing themselves really hard into the work.

In my own platoon three thoroughly bad men and three rather bad instantly disclosed them-

selves even to the eagle eye of a junior subaltern. But even of these one is not really slack so much as imbecile. Not so imbecile as another man who was in the company for a little time, but then discharged as 'unlikely to become an efficient soldier.' He had only got in by accident. He was a mad organ-grinder, and, according to his own account, had been kidnapped and enlisted by press-gang methods. Anyway he has now been weeded out, and if I might only weed out about five more I think something might be done. It would be a great advantage in some ways of course to be serving in one of these Public School Corps. But the men here are more the ordinary recruiting class, and it's a newer and more interesting experience to have to deal with them. They are not—with a few exceptions—unemployables, but they are not 'gentlemen' nor even earnest members of the W.E.A. They remind me more of some of the Oxford village labourers than of any other class, though they have a touch of London smartness to help them. One or two are comparatively swells, but I shouldn't think that many of them have earned more than 30*s*. a week. The difficulty is chiefly with the N.C.O's. In my platoon one section stands

out above the rest simply because it has been run by a lance-corporal who is an elementary schoolmaster by profession. His military experience is antiquated; but he certainly has arranged to train his men in every way. The contrast between him and the miserable old idiot who has medals and years of service behind him is the most striking proof I've yet seen of the advantages of education.

The trouble is that the N.C.O's cannot be formed into a class and taught their job properly as in the ordinary army. They have to teach before they've learnt, and, though I'm in the same box myself, I have had a few weeks to learn in, and they have not even had that.

I was put into 'B' Company of the 6th Battalion. They are in their sixth week of training, though some of them turned up later, and the programme is fairly extensive—squad drill, musketry, physical training, company drill, route marching, night operations, and a few odds and ends. As soon as they found I knew how to form fours they put me in control of the platoon, fortunately under one of their Regular officers who was recalled from the transport ship at Southampton to command this company, and I have been

spending a good deal of the week in learning the general control of my platoon: inspecting their feet and their boots and their rifles and their dinners and their invisible tooth-brushes, urging doctors to discharge a man with only one kidney, signing their passes for Saturday night, looking after blankets and boot-polish, recovering marriage certificates for a man who could not get his separation allowance, and all sorts of little details like that. Military discipline is a queer thing and I do not altogether jump to it.

If you are a second lieutenant your lot depends a good deal on the temper of your commanding officer—luckily mine is suave. But the other side is what you have to insist on in other people. You have to be as particular about buttons as J—— is with an argument. I shall soon be saying to men, as my captain said the other day to one unfortunate creature who had fallen out during a route march—'There's no such thing as falling out on march. In my regiment no man ever falls out unless he falls down unconscious.' I find it difficult to talk like that at present, but no doubt it will come with practice. The route marching, by the way, was pretty good. We did twelve or

thirteen miles between 9.30 and 2.0, and could certainly have marched seventeen miles in the day without too great an effort. As far as I gather no ordinary recruits would do anything like as well.

There are enormous rifle ranges here, and we shall certainly stop hereabouts till they have been used. After that I don't despair of Shorncliffe. But, anyway, we can hardly stay on this God-forsaken swamp all through the winter. Meanwhile my only trouble is that the practical details leave very little time to educate oneself in the more theoretical parts of the game. I've completely abandoned all other forms of literature.

When I get back I shall swell like a turkey-cock at every remark addressed to me. . . . Your Balliol Socialist* is not a difficult problem if you will consult the Army Act, 46, iii c. He is undoubtedly guilty of insulting a professor while on active service, and must be sentenced to Field Punishment No 1—*i.e.*, he will be tied down in his room at Balliol and gagged while the Master reads to him slowly all Mallock's anti-Socialist pamphlets.

* This was a second year man who addressed a certain Professor by his Christian name.

I'm dropping off to sleep, and, though it's Sunday to-morrow, I've got to take a company to Church Parade—being in fact the only officer left with it. We get up usually at 5.0—to-morrow it will be 6.45. The Scottish Borderers probably get up at 10.0, and spend two hours tying up their kilts.

I envy Denis—flying is the best job nowadays. My love to all of you.

Yours,

A. G. H.

October, 1914.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I am very ungrateful never to have thanked you for the shoes, which are most comfortable. But I was very glad to get them, and I return extra thanks now. Last week was dreadfully boring. I was marking in the butts the whole time, and things moved so slowly. This week will be like it. You can understand that when to-day they asked for volunteers to join the Expeditionary Force as observers in the Flying Corps I felt very tempted to give my name. But I do not know enough sketching and map-

reading to be any good at present. In any case hardly any one will be taken now. Sandling is still a distant prospect. The builders of the huts have struck, and I don't know how long it will be before they are appeased. There seems some hope that we shall go about November 20th, but I don't think before, so I hope to get home next Saturday for the night. Might I ask you to do one more thing? Would you buy a box of chocolates—Fuller's for choice, and send it up to the Manns' in time to reach them at dinner. It is J. S. M's* twenty-first birthday, and he is going home for dinner. As he eats most of my chocolates in any case, I think I will present him with some. Please get him a box worthy of the occasion and charge it down to my account. More to-morrow about Christmas presents and other things. Meanwhile my thanks and my love.

Yours,

Arthur.

* Lieut. J. S. Mann of the R. W. Kents and Balliol College.

October, 1914.

My dear Reg,*

Many thanks for your letter, which was a most refreshing message from civilization. If any one had told me three months ago that I should be celebrating the arrival of autumn by sleeping on a river marsh and getting up at five every morning, I should have given the man up for an idiot. But here I am doing it: and in the intervals I'm drilled and I drill others, I teach all men in my platoon to use a very dangerous and scientific weapon of destruction and I inspect men's boots, feet and tooth-brushes as if I were a school prefect, a bootmaker, a chiropodist and a police inspector all rolled up together. I never hear any music, and I never read anything but the paper and little military text books. I make no jokes and sit in solemn silence while my commanding officers explain the truth. Discipline my boy—that is what I have always needed. By the time you see me again I shall never open my mouth except to jerk out a command and a curse, and my only interest in life besides arrangements for killing

* Mr. R. V. Lennard, formerly Exhibitioner of New College, Lecturer at Wadham.

other people will be food and warmth. Warmth is deficient here, but food quite admirable—and overeating is now not only a pleasure but a duty, for otherwise every kind of disease is produced by the superb riverside climate.

The men are mostly just a tiny bit above the ordinary recruit class according to our Regular officers, but they will be better in the later battalions. We of the first new army ought to get out first, but to balance that advantage we've got a larger percentage of ordinary riff-raff among our recruits than those who came later. I should like to sack about 15 per cent of my platoon, and the rest would become jolly good. But the 15 per cent. are a problem that military law suppresses but cannot solve. The best of my men remind me a little of your Heyford friends mixed with a little Town 'sharpness' and I'm sure you'll be glad to know that my best N.C.O. is an elementary schoolmaster. I concealed the sad fact about my profession for as long as possible and then it fell out by accident. As a result I shall have to interpret for the regiment when we go abroad and be thankful if nothing worse happens to me. But sleep and food are so good nowadays that I can't feel very discontented and merely wonder

whether this extremely rigorous training is ever going to have a practical chance of demonstrating its value. Its' jolly hard work for the men—twice as hard as the ordinary recruit's at least. It's good that they are standing it so well.

I wish I could get to Heyford. But I'm never able to be away on Sunday night, nor to leave on Saturday till about 4.0, and I'm afraid the trains simply won't fit. You know how much I want to see you again, but the right plan will be for you to come to my home some Sunday when I can get leave. Won't you? I've lots to tell you.

Meanwhile my love to you.

A. G. H.

Oliver* a policeman ! ! !

SANDLING, HYTHE,
21st December, 1914.

MY DEAR LADY MARY,†

It is extremely kind of you to think of making presents to my platoon, and those you name all

* Surgeon O. H. Gotch, R.N., Commoner of New College, 1907—1911.

† Lady Mary Murray.

sound most attractive. But we are going away on six days' leave next Monday and I am hoping to get to Oxford on Tuesday next. Might I visit you then and discuss that and many other things? I shall invite myself to lunch if I don't hear from you to put me off. Our little story of misfortune continues gaily. We were under canvas till December 3rd. We then came into huts here, and, after a desperate struggle with them, we are now leaving them for billets. The huts were badly built and not half finished. The rain comes in through the roof and the windows, and the leaks have become worse and worse, till now it rains as fast inside as out in some places, and drips everywhere. Also, it does this every day now for a fortnight. It is a dreadful waste of money over the huts, which we probably shan't be able to occupy till February now—about a month or six weeks before we are sent off to France. But there's really nothing for it. Neither the health nor the morale of the troops can stand against winter in wooden shower baths sunk in a quagmire of mud. I will tell you more on Tuesday, if I have the good luck to finish billeting by then, and to find you in when I call.

Yours, A. G. Heath.

SANDY HATCH, HYTHE,
February 21st, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Will you please come and stay with me here for a few days this week? I am left here, as you know, to my great annoyance, but it would make up for the annoyance if you could come down.

I shall be extremely busy, probably, and we should have little time but meals together; still that is something. Anyway, if you could manage it I should be very pleased. There is a train leaving Charing Cross at 3.0. p.m., and reaching Hythe at 4.44. If I don't hear to the contrary, I'll expect you by that.

Yours with love,

ARTHUR.

You know the way to Sandy Hatch don't you, if I happened to miss you? And, if Dad came down to take care of you, there would be plenty of room for him.

ALBUERA BARRACKS, ALDERSHOT,
March 6th, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

. . . Have I written since we got here? The journey with the 'details' was quite easily man-

aged: the barracks were left dirty by brutes who went out of them, but it's a very great comfort to get the men near at hand and all together. . . . We've got the new equipment—leather instead of webbing. Equipment, by the way, means belt, ammunition pouches, water bottle, entrenching tool, and carriers, haversack, and pack—the pack being the large rücksack, in which great coat and a change of underclothing are carried. The total weight carried in this way is about 50 lbs. What concerns me more nearly is that the officers carry it as well as the men now, under the new regulations, and there's no doubt that it adds very greatly to the burden of marching. In fact, yesterday was the first day I have been knocked up since joining. We went out seven or eight miles, and then did a 'brigade exercise,' during which I was what is called a 'liaison officer,' keeping up communication between the Battalion and the Brigade. That involved a certain amount of running about, and, what was more important, I didn't manage to get anything to eat till three o'clock, and then only one sandwich. As we started at 8.15 and got back at 4.15, I was driven a bit too hard, and the last hour I suffered agonies, feeling faint

and sick and sweating all over. I couldn't fall out, because we make it a point of honour not to, and refuse to let men fall out on any account unless they actually drop down. So I finished the march, but I was very much knocked up at the end, and was too sick to take any food, which was a pity. However, here I am to-day, fit and well again. . . . We've also drawn our new rifles, and very good they are. . . . We are awfully crowded here—four of us in one room, and Aldershot is so full of soldiers, you feel sick at the sight of them. But, even so, I prefer it to Hythe. . . . Best love to all of you,

ARTHUR.

ALBUERA BARRACKS,
ALDERSHOT,
March, 1915.

MY DEAR PHILIP,

I am awfully sorry I moved away from Hythe just before you reached Ashford. But the first Army has concentrated here and when you suggested meeting me I was well away from all reasonable railwav communications. Besides which I have only had one night's leave this year. I hope to be home either this week-end

(27th—28th) or the next. But even that is very doubtful, and I'm afraid it's no use making plans to meet. If I send a sudden postcard to Beckenham some Sunday wanting to meet you in the afternoon you'll know that it's not forgetfulness that has made me wait till the last moment, but sheer uncertainty what is going to happen. We have been 'tightened up' since Christmas. At Hythe nothing but enormous field days in Battalion and Brigade training. Here the same with our second musketry course now being rushed through in a week. I have been put on a machine-gun course which has lasted now nearly a fortnight and still has a week or so to run. I've enjoyed it and only fear that I may have to teach one of the machine-gun sections, which, on the whole, would be rather boring work. There isn't much probability of my handling machine-guns in battle for we've got a regular M.-G. officer and I should only be 3rd or 4th reserve. Still you never know, and I believe M.-G. officers only last about a month.

I'm sorry to talk about the Army, but what else can one think of? I never read anything but military stuff and not much of that. I hear from Reg that Fisher is making him

write on the only subject I have thought twice about since the war began, outside war itself. So I shall now leave that to him. . . . Are you flooded out by new officers and aged captains? I see from the *Gazette* that you are now a full lieutenant, and therefore my senior. They've only just started promoting us and my turn is not yet. But I think our dug-outs would beat yours, and as for our latest subalterns! We are all really very proud of ourselves. Here are our regular officers who have been jeering at us for months and boring us to death by stories of what the first battalion did. Then a week or two ago a sergeant arrived who had fought with the first in France and come back wounded. Almost his first remarks were about the awful difficulties they had there. And he actually went on 'Of course it will be quite different with these men—you can see that. They joined because they wanted to help, but over there they were all unwilling.' No doubt he meant the reservists—still these men were praised to the skies by Smith-Dorrien, and generally placarded all over Kent as *the* heroes of the twentieth century. Only the thought that the tenth battalion may some day hear the same about us sobers me.

What I want is life when you need not keep looking at your watch, where there are no parades, no absentees, no lost boots, no new issues of socks, no generals, no field days, but you can read a book when you want to read it and dawdle over your tea. That is what I want —laziness in some place like Heyford Rectory garden. But meanwhile on the whole I'm quite happy and it doesn't matter a scrap whether I am or not because we shall get away in anything from three to six weeks unless the signs are deceiving us; and, once away, in my own opinion we shall all be casualties before very long. When we are all dead they will make peace and the only thing that annoys me is that I shan't be alive to grumble at the terms. Well, I should like to hear some time where you are now and what you are doing. But I know that writing is difficult for the hard-worked young subaltern, and if you feel inclined to grumble at this letter—as I should if I had to read it—remember that

Though stupid, uninforming and dull
It is the work
Of one who cherishes a sincere regard
For all lieutenants

Of the new armies
Except for a number of so-called officers
Whose names
Are
Omitted for considerations of space
And
What is infinitely more
Welcomes any means, however cumbrous
Of showing
His solicitude
For the unfortunate recipient
Of this disjointed scrawl.

My love to R.O.* and yourself.

Yours, A. G. H.

THE OFFICERS' CLUB,
ALDERSHOT,
April, 1915.

MY DEAR BARKER,†

Am I right in recognizing your hand in an article called 'The Palimpsest of History,'

* Lieut. R. O. Morris, formerly Exhibitioner of New College.

† Mr. Ernest Barker, Fellow of New College.

which the *Times* printed recently? Lennard told me that you were the author of an earlier article, in which my dulled eye seems to find the same style. If it is, thank you for illuminating the *Times* with bits of literature that make one ready to forgive some of the rest of its performances. With its leaders I am thoroughly disgusted. The absolutely groundless attacks on the country for not 'realizing the war,' the childish attempts to put the blame on the Government for not allowing Northcliffe correspondents to write more lies about the things they have not seen, and the ill-concealed chagrin with which they greet speeches like the last of Asquith and Lloyd George, that show by chapter and verse neither country nor Government to be asleep—they annoy me more than I can say, except for the hope they inspire that the *Times* is losing heavily over the war. . . . Our training is pretty well over, and, though I can't give exact dates, it is pretty certain that we shall be abroad within a month. A good thing too. There's lots more they could teach us officers, but any increase to our efficiency would be more than counterbalanced by the growing staleness the men will suffer from if we are kept back much longer. They have done in eight

months what the ordinary regulars take three years for, and nothing could keep them going but the expectation of battle soon. I feel something of the same. The prospect of three more months training at the same pace as the last three makes me grow pale, and, though I don't expect to enjoy the real thing much, I feel it is about time to get on to it. The only thing that troubles me much is my mother. I'm afraid she thinks that I am certain to become a casualty, and, though of course she has not talked much about it, it is pitiful to see how much she shrinks from my going. The thought of the vast amount of similar suffering all through Europe makes me more indignant against war than anything else. I find that, although my first Battalion has lost practically all its first set of officers and half its second, one assumes the chances of not being killed or disabled to be greater than they really are. For the first time for months lately, I have been thinking about Oxford and what I shall do when I get back. I wish I could really specialize and get to know something. I often want to become a historian, but in history I should want to work on lines that the historians might not approve and be thrown back to philosophy. Then, again, I find

myself longing for new 'schools' to be created. Why cannot modern, even perhaps contemporary, civilization be studied all round—its literature, its social structure, its thoughts and beliefs—in the same sort of way we try to study Greece. It would not be political 'science' that I want, nor merely a study of political conditions, nor yet merely a study of historical antecedents, which seem to me often to paralyse as much as to stimulate. But then, I cannot work it out, and, anyway, when I get back, I shall have first to make up for not reading any books but military shop for a year, whatever I start on when that happy time comes. But what a splendid opportunity for the great, wise, and powerful like yourself to create an entirely new Oxford, where even the passman shall be educated, and culture—forgive its name—not confined to one school (or is it two?) This is the result of a lazy Sunday after a week in camp on divisional manœuvres. Ordinarily I don't think at all now-a-days, except about boots, clothing, equipment, and tactical schemes. I am sorry you are to be victimized, but I've written all this tosh now, and shall therefore post it. It will at least serve to send you my love. We are moving to Winchester soon, and,

if we are there for any time, I shall look for your son and heir.

Yours,

A. G. Heath.

Aldershot,

May, 1915.

My dear Mother,

I'm sorry you could not see me off quite at ease on Sunday. But I did so much enjoy the visit. You will not take it as any reflection on home when I say that I don't think I've ever enjoyed short visits to it so much before. And the baby always puts the crown on our pleasure, doesn't she? I arrived back into a sea of rumours. Things started with the ugly reality of breakfast at six and a long morning in the rain on the Ash Ranges, firing machine-guns. No one really knows what is going to happen, and though the prophets fix on Monday, that seems to me an unlikely day to shift troops about. All we have been told definitely is to take plenty of food with us when we do go, since our transport is not going the same route. By all appearances next Sunday seems very unlikely, and perhaps Thursday evening might be the

best time to go up to Waterloo. Margie could then have dinner with us and go right off to Derbyshire. But it's a bad day for you isn't it? And there's no definite news of our departure yet. What do you think?

Love from

ARTHUR.

THE OFFICERS' CLUB,
ALDERSHOT,
May, 1915.

MY DEAR REG,

I don't believe I ever answered your last letter, and it must have come nearly a month ago. But here we are continually expecting to move and continually postponed again. As you're not a spy, I don't see why you shouldn't be told, what I believe you know already, that two divisions of K.'s first army have gone already. Our own turn comes soon, but we have given up speculating what precise day. It might have been any time during the last fortnight so far as we were concerned. . . . I wonder what your drastic judgment decrees about the Coalition. The idea contains so

many difficulties that it must, one would think, be the only hope or it could never have been adopted. I'm sorry about Churchill, whom I greatly admire. The one touch of humour in the situation is the complete faith the Tory party has in L. G., even after the drink trouble. When half of them want him to save England from the results of K.'s mismanagement at the War Office, while the other half say with tears in their eyes that they cannot spare him from the Treasury, he must chuckle to himself. But what a deplorable necessity to strengthen a Cabinet by dismissing Haldane and taking on Walter Long! What I should really like would be to see Haldane retained in face of immense popular clamour and Lord Northcliffe's papers suppressed in the course of it. There is no such thing as useful criticism of the Government during a war of this magnitude, and the sooner that is realised the better we shall get on. Democratic government needs time and a situation where governments can fall and be replaced without danger. Those conditions do not exist now, and the *Daily Chronicle's* very conservative argument against the Coalition as a break with our national traditions appears to me to overlook the fact that

normally we're not fighting a furious and immensely powerful enemy.

Well, the next time I write it may very likely be from the trenches. Do let me know how your plans get on. All my love to you.

Yours,

ARTHUR HEATH.

THE OFFICERS' CLUB,
ALDERSHOT,
1st June, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I've packed and labelled my things for home, I've seen the men draw their ammunition, I've stuffed my pack, my haversack and my pockets full of all imaginable articles, and in an hour or so we shall move. So my last thoughts in England are to you. I had myself photographed this morning. Enclosed is the receipt for a dozen, and the proofs will be sent to you in due course. One is just to amuse you by showing what my hair looks like now. The rest I hope are more flattering. If I never see you again, this will show you what I was like at the end of my time in England, and if I come back and settle down to civilian life again, it

will be a memento of my curious past. I wish I could tell you how much I love you. But you know already. As I told you, don't bother if letters get through irregularly. We shall have a busy time till we get up into the trenches, and it won't be all leisure even there. So always take no news to be good news.

My love to you all,

ARTHUR.

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,

June 2nd, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

The conditions of correspondence are very odd. I censor my own letters on the understanding that no place names occur. However, I don't think it indiscreet to say that we had a good passage, arrived where you expected us to arrive, and went up at once to a rest camp, where we wait for a few hours before going nearer up. There is nothing to record at all, except the curious attempts of the men to talk French with any natives who will stop and hob-nob with them. Our camp is in a very good position, rather resembling Sandling, but fortunately dry. We shall pick up our trans-

port, which has gone by a different route, pretty soon now. What we shall do eventually of course we are not told, and could not reveal it if we were. I never came abroad with so little sense of leaving England. When all the familiar faces of your regiment are around and the usual routine is going on, nothing but the occasional appearance of a French urchin wanting souvenirs would suggest that you were abroad at all. The men are in very high spirits, and all is as cheerful as it could be.

Love to you all from

ARTHUR.

June 7th, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I wonder if you have had my cards and letter. I've just had the post, and am most grateful for it. It is wonderful how kind people are to write in this way, and it was very kind of those Oxford friends to write to you about me. The chance of death still seems remote, and I don't think the men have it much in mind. Certainly I have not, though when the shells start bursting all around us, I suppose it will be different. Long, hard marches in great heat and with

heavy packs have been our fate lately, and the men were certainly very near the limit of their endurance. The pack, with all the active service kit, is too heavy. I am afraid I did not handle them very judiciously on the march. I felt so much the need of pushing them on. Just a few faint-hearted men will upset a whole company by falling out or straggling. I wonder whether it will be the same in actual fighting. One never knows. But there is more excitement then than in marching anyway. I wonder if all this ought to be censored, or whether I may tell you that we have been in camp bivouac and billets already. Where I am now we are partly in bivouac, partly in billets. Matthews and I are in an unpretentious but comfortable house, with a most agreeable landlord and landlady. They gave us beer last night—thin but cooling—and coffee this morning all on their own, and talked till my French fairly gave out. They have had Germans where we are now—and they protested to us that if—many months ago now—the English troops had got in any later the whole village would have been burnt. The Germans behaved well in some places and badly in others. Opposite to us there were,

we were told, two excellent officers who locked their men in and kept strict discipline. Here they had twelve Germans who occupied the whole house, pushed monsieur and madame into the loft and stole the blankets. Well, I daresay that is true. There will be the same kind of differences in behaviour when our troops get into Germany, except that I do not think any one will steal blankets. They have far too much to carry already. The heat is very great and unexpectedly trying. It is as if summer had suddenly burst upon us and we didn't really expect it. What I envy from the bottom of my heart are the aeroplanes. You see them everywhere, beautiful in the sunlight, in perfectly clear air, going, I suppose, at anything up to ninety miles an hour, and in what a heavenly wind, while down below we struggle with the dust and wonder how long it still is to the next halt. Even when occasionally you see shrapnel burst round the aeroplanes, it is a lovely sight. The aeroplanes are not hit, and the smoke hovers about in white cloudlets and makes the whole scene more beautiful than ever. The people here have been crowded out with refugees from Belgium and from Lille. The

Belgians they do not like, although here, too, there must be a strong Flemish element in the population. Monsieur is Flemish by birth, though madame is pure French. The water supply is not too good or abundant. There are interesting villages round here, with prosperous-looking farms, and a general air of prosperity and cultivation, in spite of the innumerable wagons and columns that pass to and fro. Queer names the places have, too. We are perhaps too near a celebrated Oxford College* for complete comfort, but old jealousies have to be forgotten now. The mask has arrived, and I am most obliged for it. I will send off things to be washed some time soon, if I get a chance. But at present I am getting along splendidly. All I ask is for you not to worry if letters come irregularly or there is a considerable gap. Yesterday, *e.g.*, I was at work from 4.30 a.m. till 8.15 p.m., pretty continuously, except for an occasional rest and meal, and it was not possible to get a letter off. I will try to write twice a week, but, if I cannot, do not get anxious. My best love to you all.

* Refers to Bailleul.

June, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

As I went away in the hospital wagon yesterday I asked Mann to write and let you know I had scarlet fever. I wish now I hadn't done so, because it turns out that I've not got the disease. It happened like this: . . . . on Wednesday I got knocked up by something or other. There were heavy rashes, but I knew that a lot of people had had them, and did not worry about it. However, I felt very tired, ... and I lay down most of the day. Yesterday I was no better, and I got the doctor to look at me. The rashes had developed and spread pretty well all over me by then, and he soon decided that it was scarlet fever, though my temperature was very slight. Accordingly I packed up my things as best I could and was bundled away to an isolation hospital not far off, with the pleasant prospect of being sent back to the base, kept away from the regiment two months, and losing my place in it probably at the end of that time. I went, as you can imagine, with rather a heavy heart, though I've often felt worse as far as actual illness goes. But, as soon as the doctor here saw me, he decided

that I had *not* got scarlet fever, and to-day he is so confident about it that he is sending word to my Company to that effect, and very shortly will return me to my unit, unless something unfortunate happens to delay it. Every now and then he brings in another doctor, and they admire my rash, which is still stupendous, though blotchy now instead of equable scarlet, and discuss in learned language what the meaning of it may be. To the lay mind they do not appear to reach any satisfactory conclusion. The doctor in principle holds that the ointment and a food upset have produced a toxic erythema. To this there is one fatal objection. I have had no food upset, though it is true that two days ago, not feeling hungry, I took no food at all. However, he kindly suggests that I should remember the food upset in question, and does not wait for me to assure him that I can't. Their negative conclusions are (1) that I have not got scarlet fever and (2) that I have not got German measles. My own less ambitious deductions are that I must avoid ointments more than lice themselves, and that I must pay no attention to the symptoms of any disease so long as I can call it a toxic erythema. I am dressed

and sitting up as I write this, and, though I naturally feel a bit shaky, I do not think I have anything much to grumble at. My one anxiety is to get back to the battalion before anything important comes on. I don't suppose letters or parcels will reach me, but no doubt they will keep them for me at the regiment. It is good of you all to send me so many letters and things I want. Just at present I'm feeling sleepy again, and think I'll finish this letter. Probably by the time I write my next to you I shall either be back with the regiment or on the point of going.

My love to you all,

ARTHUR.

Sunday afternoon.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Here I am back again with my regiment, my second attack of 'scarlet' fever being happily finished. I feel rather slack and run down—no wonder—as I have been in bed most of the time since last Wednesday, but very much relieved that I haven't to spend six weeks in hospital and then rejoin perhaps some other regiment. My short life in hospital was quite

pleasant. It was really only a clearing hospital: *i.e.*, most cases would only be there for a day or two, and then sent down to the base. So it was a very small affair, and none of the large ward-rooms and beautiful white nurses that I rather hoped for when I resigned myself to hospital life. I've forgotten quite how much I told you. More doctors came to see me the second day. They all looked at the rash in silent admiration and agreed that, beautiful though it was, it was *not* scarlet fever. After some further hesitation they usually hazarded the opinion that it was *not* German measles. Then they talked a little learned jargon among themselves and finally either gave it up or asked me what the matter was. I would then explain that I was suffering from blood-poisoning caused by my louse protectors, and there the matter stopped. The last man to visit me was no end of a swell, Sir Wilmot Herringham from a London hospital. He felt my rash with the same admiration the other doctors had shown, and for one anxious moment he seemed to incline to the fever or measles theory: at last, however, he gave up the idea and went away saying that he did not think it was anything infectious. My temperature has been steadily

a little subnormal, and I've never been really badly ill, though for a couple of days I was prostrate, and even now don't feel quite as fit as I should. But a day or two will put me quite right again. As for our plans, there is nothing I may tell you. But I think it is fair to guess that whatever we do for some time yet will be mainly instructional, and that you need not expect me to be engaged in bloody battles just yet. I think eventually we shall work as a division, and that first they will break us in by putting us perhaps with more experienced troops somewhere. It is all very quiet, in spite of the continual supply columns, and if the great offensive is coming off this summer, at least the secrets are being well kept, and it would be very puzzling for anybody but General Headquarters to know where the blow would eventually fall. Many thanks for the chocolates, which I found waiting for me when I got back here.

[*A little later.*]

Thank you so much for all you have sent me, briar, wire-cutters, tobacco, etc. You are all so kind I hardly like to ask for anything. Thank you all so much. It is not really bad

news about Uncle Will, because, once the operation failed, the prospect looked so black. As a matter of fact, though I didn't say so at the time, I was shocked by his appearance even in London when I saw him there. It is dreadful for Auntie Agnes, and I feel the greatest sympathy for her. We are messing now in the house where Parker is staying: a nice place inhabited by the daughter of an artist, Pierre de Coninck. The house is full of beautiful pictures and has a jolly little garden. What a queer preparation for the war!

With all my love to you all and my best thanks,

ARTHUR.

June 20, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

This is more like the real thing. We have moved on again and are now bivouacking at a place that I must not give away, though, if you remember our agreement, a little ingenuity might guess that we've got past the famous dreaming spires in a direction that you may be able to conjecture. They will break us in gently, however, and I don't anticipate any-

thing dreadful. As a matter of fact, it is much pleasanter now in summer, when one can sleep out in comfort, than it would be packed in dirty barns, as I suppose our fate will be in winter. I haven't yet received any letters since those that told me of Uncle Will's death, but I expect I shall have some luck soon. When will you be going away on holiday? I hope you'll thoroughly enjoy it. I am sometimes of an envious disposition, but never nowadays about people in England. I hope they will all, and you especially, enjoy themselves as much as they possibly can. After all, a good deal of the time when they are resting the soldiers enjoy themselves here too; they get excellent food, and, on the whole, are less bothered than at home when training—*i.e.* bothered by their own side. The presence of the Huns is a disadvantage, but I haven't any sympathy with those who say that, as every now and then the men at the Front get a rotten time, therefore all at home should wear continual sackcloth and ashes. I have got two things that I shall send home as soon as I possibly can. One, my Commission, an amusing little document that has arrived at last, and the other a photograph of 'B' Company offi-

cers that Mlle. de Coninck took before we left our last station. I am waiting for a decent-sized envelope. By the way, I am being promoted to the exalted rank of full Lieutenant. It has gone through the official quarters here, and it will be in the *Gazette* sometime in the next few weeks. When it appears you might send me two more stars, as I am not sure whether the regimental tailor has any with him.

Sorry—a job has come along and I must stop. I mean every letter in the next sentence, the first as much as any.

My love to you all,

Yours,

A. G. HEATH.

June 24, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

The reason my last letter stopped abruptly was that I was suddenly ordered off to my first spell of duty in the trenches. Only some officers and N.C.O.'s went first, but since then we have taken the men in too, and we've all been instructed in the routine of trench duties. Routine is a just description of it too, for the

battalion we have been with for instructional purposes has been in this part of the line for months and months. There is some prospect of our being moved away soon and placed on our own, but no definite orders yet. The people in here had an appalling time during the winter, for the country is absolutely water-logged in any case, and the clay absorbs every inch of rain for the maximum amount of time possible. They thought very little of any enemies during that period, except rain and mud, and there were places further north where there was hardly a shot fired for weeks and weeks, while each side was struggling, sometimes with material taken from the same places, to put their trenches into a habitable condition. But they had to abandon the original line in most places. Here a ruinous old ditch about twenty yards in front marks where the old trench went, and we are in an elaborate system of breast-works built up behind it in the spring. Very comfortable they are, too. Good dug-outs for the men to sleep in, plenty of room to move about, quite magnificent communication trenches, no difficulty in getting rations up —the officers, in fact, run their messes on food supplied from a town near—and even little

flower gardens in one or two places, and near me a rather indifferent gramophone. So the awful hardships of trench life are easily over-estimated in a place like this. But then, this is both a very quiet part of the line and a very well-arranged system of trenches. The chief disadvantage inside is the swarm of flies. However careful you are about sanitation and food, it seems impossible to check them, and I am afraid they will be responsible for some sickness before the summer is out. However, it is universally agreed that our trenches are more sanitary than either the French or the German. This is not a quarter for big attacks and movements. There are little shows going on fairly constantly, the rival artilleries do a little quiet shelling now and then, and a fair amount of small arm ammunition gets let off—rather promiscuously, one occasionally thinks. But there are not many casualties as a result of it all, and, compared with some parts of the line, this is absolutely peaceful. Our men were a good deal excited the first time they had real bullets whizzing about them or hitting the parapet, and still more when a few shells fell around the trenches. But they rapidly settled down to trench life, and I think they

will be sorry when their time of instruction is over and they take on other bits of the line themselves, and very likely in less comfortable places. Relieving the trenches—at night, of course—is rather an anxious and awkward business till one is used to it. But I've no doubt that then there is no trouble. Of course, the routes down are frequently under rifle and sometimes under artillery fire, but the areas covered are large, no systematic attempt is made to prevent reliefs coming up, and every precaution is taken to conceal the time and nature of such movements. In this part there have been hardly any casualties in such expeditions. I don't know that I quite like the general feeling one gets of 'Here we are and here we rest.' That is better, of course, than to think of retiring, but troops who get used to holding immensely strong positions like these with what is, as war goes, a minimum of danger, must, you would think, rather lose the aggressive spirit you hear so much talk about. However, that will no doubt be proved sometime. Thank you so much for the parcel of sweets and cakes. You lavish things on me, and really I am in any case quite comfortable at present. What I would really like is a little

literature. If we are in for trench work, it will come in handy. Could you let me have *Land and Water*? *Punch* hasn't come out to me. I expect you are not sending it, but in any case I have had it, so please do not bother. I would also like Belloc's 'General Sketch of the European War,' and, if you would not mind my being so luxurious, the 'Oxford Book of English Verse' in as small a size as you can get it. Now please do not make me a present of all these things. I usually spend £20 or £30 a year on books, and I've hardly spent a penny this year. So if Dad would buy them for me and put them to my account with him I should be most obliged. One other thing I should like is a pipe. I have lost mine, and I really think that, with all these insects, smoking might be useful. Then, again, I wonder if I might have a small amount of anti-insect stuff, as this ointment seems bad for me. I believe a mixture of eucalyptus, camphor and sal volatile has been found useful. I wonder if any chemist could advise? Please forgive my bothering you for these things, and don't send them as presents. I get ashamed of the quantities of stuff people—and you especially—will send me. Well, you shall have another

letter soon, and, meanwhile, my love to all of you.

Yours,

ARTHUR.

BELGIUM,

June 28th.

MY DEAR DAD,

I am writing you a birthday letter, not that I don't know it won't be due till the third of July, but I shall be busy the next few days in the line we are just taking over, and so I write now. I wish I had some birthday present to send you, but perhaps a letter which contains no begging will be so welcome a change as almost to count for one Our new line is unfortunately very dirty. It is also very far from complete, and while we are there we shall probably have a very strenuous, though not I think a very dangerous, time. Here the mosquitoes are such a dismal nuisance—I am stung all over, and at first feared worse things than mosquitoes. Still I've kept very fairly clean so far, and though the next few days will be very dirty, after that we shall rest for a few days, and I hope wash a good deal of the time.

I shall have more to say about the war then. The wood we are in now would be quite jolly were it not for the insects and the bullets and the noise of the artillery. Ours has been making quite a row to-day. But it is really all quite gentle ever since we ceased to hear what was presumably the roar of the French artillery at the Labyrinth and Souchez. It was absolutely continuous, like thunder rumbling all through the night. Very pleasant at a distance. Well, I wish I could help to celebrate your birthday. I shall not forget it nor think of you with less love because I am here, engaged in plumbing, digging, and occasionally dodging a bullet: but there will not be too many of them to disturb my mind or drive away from it thoughts appropriate to your birthday. With many happy returns of the day and my love,

Yours,

ARTHUR.

July 6th, 1915.

MY DEAR MURRAY,

I wrote a letter to Miss Blomfield some time ago describing the absolute ease and comfort of life in France. I now retract. We have

had our first independent tour in the trenches now, and war in its most Grim, Ghastly and Terrible forms burst upon us. That, at least, is the impression I got from reading the men's letters since they have come back into billets. Personally, I did not find things quite so lurid, but one day I will write you a letter in the style of the more imaginative of our men, and if that doesn't make you feel we've been 'bearing the blunt,' which again is their favourite way of describing it, I don't know what will. However, perhaps you'd like a more sober account to begin with. My platoon had the doubtful honour of being in the most dangerous part ot the line we were holding, and had nearly half the battalion casualties, but they were not serious. Our welcome was a little unnerving. We were in a place where the lines run at curious angles, and in a sort of corner, where the trenches were about 120 yards apart, the Germans had exploded a mine nearly half way across some months ago. About an hour after we had got in there was a tremendous explosion, the earth flew up, from a place that seemed quite near us, fifty yards or so into the air, and at once the German rifles and machine-guns opened a heavy fire.

The men were a good bit scared, and for a moment or two I wondered if the Germans were going to rush. My job seemed to be to steady things a bit, and it would have been a fine occasion for a dramatic speech. The only remarks that came into my mind, however, were 'Sentries look to your periscopes and the rest keep low.' It was prosaic, but the opportunities for romance do not occur to you at the moment—at least, they didn't to me. After all, it is no use saying 'Remember Waterloo' to my men, for most of them have never heard of the battle, and would think that I was referring to the railway station. My job, however, really began later. There used to be a listening patrol in the old mine-crater near which the new mine had been exploded. I had to go out, as commander of that part of the trench, and find out what really had happened, and what could be done about occupying the place or preventing the Germans from getting it. So I crawled out and reconnoitred. Do you know the policemen's chorus in 'The Pirates of Penzance'—'with cat-like tread upon the foe I steal'? It was absurdly like that. I didn't know where the new mine had blown up nor where the old one was pre-

cisely, nor what was the way in nor anything important. So I had to make my way round and look over the rim very anxiously and carefully, with a revolver in my hand, hoping that there would be no Germans waiting to shove a bayonet at me. Lying down between the lines and hearing the bullets whiz over you is really not at all bad fun, and I quite enjoyed one place where I could be completely covered, as I thought, and survey the German trenches about thirty yards off. But my pleasure was rather damped the next morning when I saw from a periscope that the place was right in the line of fire from the English trenches. I thought at the time that the ping-pongs were rather close, but I couldn't quite see where our trenches ran. I don't think there really was much danger about it, except that the lines run across one another in a very odd shape, and it was difficult to be quite sure which way the firing was really going. After my first two nights I settled where to put my patrol, and what work must be done to screen them, and I felt quite secure about it. For by a process, not to be called reasoning, which Joseph would compare with the worst vagaries of J. S. Mill, you expect that after you've found a place

unoccupied for two nights running you won't find it occupied the third. I had a little trouble the last night, however, for one of the sentries thought he saw two Germans looking into the approach by which we reached the mouth of the craters. He had really just lost his head, but I had to get a party ready in case of attack and make another reconnaissance. Of course there was nothing there, but it meant a certain loss of sleep, and really that is my chief complaint of the trenches. Out of 112 hours I got twelve hours sleep, and that entirely in the daytime. I am naturally a very sleepy animal, and do not like losing any rest. The other thing I hate is the artillery. I detest them and all their works. They stay three or four miles behind in the most comfortable billets imaginable and just amuse themselves by loosing off their instruments of torture at the infantry. It is all very well to talk of a clean death in battle, but it's not a clean death that the artillery deals. It means arms and legs torn off and men mangled out of recognition by their great hulking bullies of guns. I would sweep them all away and settle it by the quiet and decent methods of the infantry. Not that we have suffered a heavy bombard-

ment. But the whole thing is like Mr. Boythorn and Sir Leicester Deadlock. You remember about the right of way—'He brings an action against me for assault and battery, I continue to assault and batter, he sends his minions to block the path, I turn the fire engine on them,' &c. Well, the whole thing is tit-for-tat. We break their parapet one night—the next morning they break ours. They drop some rifle grenades into our trenches—we set up an infernal machine to do the same to theirs. I had great fun finding out how to work it. Most of these grenades on both sides fail to go off, I fancy. In general, if one side is quiet, the other waits a long time before provoking him. The real depressing thing about this trench warfare is plainly that you know your own casualties, but you have very little idea of theirs. It's not like fighting in the open, where you know at least that you have gained a mile or lost it. It spoils the beauty of these wars of attrition so much not to know which side is being worn away most. Flies are a great nuisance, and mosquitoes also. The most cheering things I've heard really are that the German sanitary arrangements are much inferior to ours and the health

of their troops worse. Our men are certainly very well, very kindly treated by the people here and their friends at home, and getting better food on the whole than at Aldershot, or indeed than in many of their own homes. I am writing to thank Lady Mary for her gifts. You really overwhelm me with kindness, and I feel that I ought to be having a much more uncomfortable time to justify it. At least, I don't have the trial of reading all these wretched papers and politicians whining about the war. I was so glad to see your letter about Northcliffe and the Bishop of Pretoria. Of course, the right thing is not to buy the *Times*, though it's a difficult habit to break, and my mess still takes it. The trouble is that a lot of the complaints seem well grounded, though nothing can excuse the way they are put, nor the uselessness of crying over spilt milk. The poor old Grand Duke, I'm afraid, is really on the way to Nijni Novgorod at last. But I expect your faith in the Russian autocracy is unbroken. It's no use my advising you to read pessimistic papers now. What everybody seems to need in the Press now is a good strong dose of Winston Churchill. I wish he were a newspaper editor instead of a

Cabinet Minister. I will send you some more news soon, and try to make it less personal history. But I must not divulge secrets about the Army—even if I knew any—whereas if the Germans capture this letter it won't do them any good to know that I have been listening to the noises in their trenches with great disfavour. I told you, didn't I, that I had been with Gillespie*. I wish I were nearer Jack Medley,† but I'm not at all sorry that my place is not in the Holy of Holies. To be near him is the only thing that would console me for being shoved away back there.

My love to you all.

ARTHUR HEATH.

* 2nd Lieut. A. D. Gillespie, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, formerly Scholar of New College, who was killed in action near La Bassée, September 25th, 1915. The meeting is referred to in his *Letters from Flanders,* p. 204.

† Captain J. D. G. Medley, formerly Scholar of New College.

July 6th, 1915.

My dear Mother,

I am most annoyed with myself. I've never forgotten your birthday, in spite of the fact that I have not written till now. What prevented my getting the letter off was (1) a very hard day on Sunday showing the new relief round our trenches and getting our men out; (2) a mistake about the time of the post yesterday. So, frankly, I've not written the letter to-day. I am so desperately sorry, for I wanted to get the thing off in time. But remember that I shall think of you with just as much love to-morrow as if I had been in time to send you a letter and say so. I should like to send you a present, and to-morrow, when I shall be able to get into a fairly large town near here, I shall look out for a souvenir to send you. If I can't, you must let me pay for the mounting of one of those photographs. I hope they really are decent, but I have not seen any, of course. Well, as for the news. We are out now after our first independent tour in the trenches. Part of the time there we were in reserve, and part of the time in the front trenches. It was a good experience—a good deal of firing, a certain amount of shell-

ing, and a variety of manœuvres in the way of perfecting or at least improving our defences. The post is just going out, and I'm going to leave this letter half finished. The remainder I'll send off to-morrow.

Yours,
A. G. H.

July 6th, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Here is the continuation of what I was telling you in my last letter. The variety of experiences, as I said, was jolly good for us, and I think I learned more about the real needs of this kind of warfare in those four days than in any two months of the training. Rather luckily for me I was put with my platoon in the most difficult and dangerous part of the line. We got through with very little loss and learnt far more than we could have done in a quieter place. . . Now we are back in billets, however, we can make up for it. We are in a small manufacturing town, the men in quite comfortable little artisan houses—as we are, for that matter—and doing

just light work. Our next tour, I believe, is to be in easier lines than those we have just been holding. The men really . . . are remarkably well treated both by the people here and by their own friends at home. So, apart from the element of danger and certain minor discomforts of trench life, they have little enough cause for grumbling. We are a bit harder worked in 'B' company because one of our officers—Harris, I think you met him—has been taken off for special work, under which circumstances they never give you a substitute to make up. Here I have to act as interpreter, and my French is becoming a little more fluent. The weather is rather hot and working up for thunder. People are amazingly kind. The Murrays have loaded me up with gifts, and were sending me a shirt a week till I wrote and said I really didn't need so many. And your parcels have been a great pleasure and comfort. Please thank them all, and give my love to Alice and the baby, and thank Alice for her letter, will you? I should so like to see my niece playing by the sea, but get a good deal of pleasure from the mere thought of it. And, above all, I want to send you many happy returns of to-morrow. I shall celebrate your

birthday somehow, and, if there is anything in telepathy, my love will reach you even across the Channel.

ARTHUR.

July 7th, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Nothing more to report, but I'd like to write another line, now I have plenty of leisure, and say that I'm thoroughly enjoying our rest now we are in divisional reserve, and only fear that if it went on too long we should be softened for the work in front.

The men have had excellent baths and a change of clothing, and I think they have thoroughly got over the fatigues and general shaking up of their tour in the trenches. It is wonderful what a lot can go on when nothing appears in the papers at all, or, if anything, 'All was quiet on the British front.' But, of course, the game of tit-for-tat that you go on playing the whole time in that way would need to last a very long time before either side lost enough through it to have to give up. The weather has broken a little, and there was some thunder rain last night. I hope that you are

getting it fine and that all of you will enjoy Devonshire as much as I'm sure I should if I were there. Wonderful places these baths we visited to-day were—in dye-works, near a good-sized river where they could get water in abundance. It was the first good wash the men had had for quite a long time. There's nothing like it to smarten them up and make them feel men again. I hear that the trench I was occupying has had some nasty shelling since we were relieved. I expect that I've come out at the right time. Well, I think I told you most of the news yesterday. Many happy returns again. I shall celebrate your birthday by going into a decent-sized town near here, where I hope to get some strawberries for tea.

My best love to you all.

ARTHUR.

July 7th, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I am sending you herewith a little birthday present. It's not very beautiful,* but, as a souvenir of the strange circumstances under

* A gun-metal pendant.

which I am sending it to you, I hope you will like it. It seemed the best thing of the kind they had, and it is quite decent material at any rate. My best and constant love goes with it.

ARTHUR.

July, 1915.

MY DEAR REG,

I did write to you just before or just after leaving. Perhaps it didn't come and if so I'm very sorry. But I've been here now a lifetime—almost, a month in fact. Most of the time a good way back, during which period the regiment had the easiest time it's ever known and I should have been perfectly happy but for a mistake of our doctor's, who thought that I had caught Scarlet Fever and sent me to hospital for two or three days. But it has now been plain for some time that I had no such disease nor in fact anything the matter with me except a kind of sickness produced partly by French lack of sanitation—I lived for a fortnight with an open drain to encourage me—and partly by extreme disgust with the Press and the way things are going.

Well I'm very glad you've found your job and that such a good one. With my own, no one can say now the training is over who will get on and who won't. I only know that these feats of military daring make me sick if I stop to think about them. But with your job one can tell beforehand that you will perform it with *éclat*, and I'm so glad the uncapitalist element will be strengthened by you. . . . But so far I can't see that the Ministry of Munitions is having much truck with the grasping rich, and the attempt to work through Trade Unions will force you to add to the book an appendix on the War and Syndicalism. I wonder if we really are short of high explosive. An explanation one sometimes hears of the slowness of advance is that we are not allowed to shell Lille which the French want to preserve. I should be sceptical of the whole thing were it not for the undoubted fact that we are short of machine guns. But if you knew of course you couldn't say. I believe that our real offensive at present is in the Dardanelles. Half the first new army seems to be going there, and in any case I don't believe the Turks will last out much longer: to really bang through there would clear up a lot of difficulties and be the best answer to the

reconquest of Galicia. The casualties will be nasty if we succeed. What a shame it is that Northcliffe attributes our casualties to the shortage of munitions when we should have them in any case: in fact in still greater numbers if the triumphant advance began. It is so worrying to the men's relatives because it suggests that they needn't have been sacrificed. I don't think all the German shells can be perfection. They have just sent six near here of which one only burst. I hope your Ministry won't sacrifice thoroughness to speed.

I've not been long enough in the trenches to say much about it. By a great stroke of luck I was put in for instruction with Gillespie's regiment and had three jolly days in superb trenches with a nice quiet enemy to break one in. Now we are on our own the responsibility begins to weigh a bit. But on the whole the desperate nature of it relieves you. If you make a bad mistake you are as likely as not to die yourself and there is a lot of selfish comfort in that reflection. But I hope I shan't sacrifice too many of my men. What a nasty thing war is with all these bombs, rifle grenades and mines and heavy artillery and aeroplanes. I would abolish the whole lot of fancy tricks and

disallow everything but rifles, machine guns and light artillery. Is everybody in London as despondent as the *Times*? I can never understand why it should be necessary to paint all the pictures of the situation with the weak points on the German side left out in order to shake people up. Most Englishmen are quite enough inclined to start with to suppose they are badly led and organised. I suppose our great offensive will be in the Dardanelles really. They are crowding troops there on a very narrow front and can only mean to attack at all costs. Here I don't believe there is much doing for several months. In fact I have reluctantly come to the belief that there will be a winter campaign and that the war won't be finished till next summer. Beyond that I cannot imagine anybody's patience lasting out whatever the result. I'm a little afraid that this tremendous demand for the Army may damage the Navy. I do hope not. It has been a great misfortune for England that all or nearly all the spectacular events have been on land in this war so no one has consequently appreciated what the Navy is doing. Otherwise there could not be all this jabber about our unpreparedness. I don't know what the men think about it. When

we were doing absolutely nothing they wrote indignant letters about the slackers at home. Now we are beginning to have some work they merely thank their friends for the fags and hope that it will leave them fit and well as they are now, thank you. This is the most pampered army that has ever existed. One man got 400 cigarettes sent him in a week and cakes, soup and matches come out to them like clockwork. Not but what I am stung all over by mosquitoes and in hourly dread of lice. But she's a good army.

My love and best wishes,

ARTHUR HEATH.

I've just read this through with growing horror. I will send you a real decent letter soon. This has been written in fragments which will account for the inane repetitions and general imbecility—at least I hope it will.

July 10th, 1915.

MY DEAR JOSEPH,*

I am not sure if I ever replied to you about those books. I would like any of them, and

* Mr. H. W. B. Joseph, Fellow of New College.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

don't in the least mind which, so please let the distributor be quite free as far as I am concerned. Many thanks for the College gossip. I am very glad Allen and Haldane were re-elected; I do not think we could afford to forgo the honour of their membership. The Warden's letter about the Germans seemed to me very good, and just what is wanted. The attack* on us was just on a par with all the other attempts people make to represent the Germans as fiends, each and all of them, just because as a nation they are behaving fiendishly. I find I have got pictures of travel too plain in my mind to think that all the kind, solid, ingenuous people I met were really child-murderers just waiting their chance. The best thing that has been said about Germany was Lloyd George's reference to the 'potato spirit.' I have been reading Belloc's 'General Sketch,' and wondered again at the extent to which a man can twist facts into the scheme

* Some letters had appeared in the *Morning Post* criticising New College for including, upon a list in Chapel of its members who had fallen fighting for their country, the names of three German officers who had been undergraduates at New College. The Warden had written to the *Morning Post* explaining the action of the College, and deprecating the temper which would carry enmity beyond the grave.

he has ready for them. Germany a barbarian intruder on a Western civilization she cannot understand, and France the upholder of the ancient tradition of the West! I don't know whether that means Catholicism—if it does, the ancient tradition is a good deal stronger in Bavarian villages than in the Quartier Latin. I do think certainly that the French and English are fighting for what I should call toleration and decency in international relations, and England at any rate is carrying on her traditional opposition to any Power that tries to dominate the Continent. But what has this got to do with the ancient spirit of the West, and what is the good of treating the Germans as aliens to a civilization for which they have provided half the science and more than half the music? I like the military part of the book —always excluding the silly diagrams—but the introduction seems to me what the Army calls 'hot air.' We suffer enough from it in military circles.

There is a great deal of work on just now, and I sometimes wonder whether the Western front is going to have another spasm soon. The Russian news seems to be rather better. If they can hold the Ivangorod—Lublin line

and save Warsaw, I think the Germans will be very disappointed.

I have just had a letter from Philip Brown. He is in much the same state as I was in March, expecting an early departure, which I do not think he will have myself, and very pessimistic about the war. I suppose you all are now, though I cannot quite see why. I continue to be made very indignant by the search for scapegoats. The attack on Von Donop was especially malignant. None of those who take part in it can possibly know the facts, and it is a pure waste of time stopping to ascertain them. The exaltation of the soldier out fighting is the other craze I cannot abide. One of my brother officers has just read me a sentence or two from one of his men's letters to his home. The man is very indignant because his people took exception to the behaviour of his brother, who is also at the front and appears to have been drinking more than is good for him. 'He is out here fighting for his country and nothing should be denied him.' Similarly the local paper at Bromley objects to deserters being put in the dock. After all, it says, they have volunteered to serve their King. The sooner people realise

that a man may wear khaki and still be a slacker, the quicker we shall 'get on with the war.' It is surprising really how little the men have been spoilt by the way they are treated in the Press and on the platform. But it cannot be denied that some of them feel they have done a remarkably generous thing in offering themselves to their country, and that their country ought in return to be all gratitude and very careful what sort of a life it gives them. I would rather have reluctant conscripts than self-righteous volunteers. But, as I said, it is gratifying that the Press and public have not succeeded in doing more to demoralise our soldiers, and it is some testimony to the men's natural good sense, I think. I hope all this does not depress you. I am personally feeling very cheerful, but, as I shall have a lot of work to do soon, I will not write any more now. Did I tell you what my last tour in the trenches was like? I had some excitements, which you shall hear of later.

My love to you.

ARTHUR HEATH.

We were watching an aeroplane being shelled yesterday, and a man remarked, 'It's almost as good as a picture palace.'

July 11th, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

It is Sunday, and though we shall be working all the same in a few hours, I feel that I should like to take the opportunity of telling you some things I've wanted to say now for a long time. You remember that I told you when I was going that nothing worried me so much as the thought of the trouble I was causing you by going away, or might cause you if I was killed. Now that death is near I feel the same. I don't think for myself that I've more than the natural instinct of self-preservation, and I certainly do not find the thought of death a great terror that weighs on me. I feel rather that, if I were killed, it would be you and those that love me that would have the real burden to bear, and I am writing this letter to explain why, after all, I do not think it should be regarded as merely a burden. It would, at least, ease my feelings to try and make the explanation. We make the division between life and death as if it were one of dates—being born at one date and dying some years after. But just as we sleep half our lives, so when we're awake, too, we know that often we're only half alive.

Life, in fact, is a quality rather than a quantity, and there are certain moments of real life whose value seems so great that to measure them by the clock, and find them to have lasted so many hours or minutes, must appear trivial and meaningless. Their power, indeed, is such that we cannot properly tell how long they last, for they can colour all the rest of our lives, and remain a source of strength and joy that you know not to be exhausted, even though you cannot trace exactly how it works. The first time I ever heard Brahms' Requiem remains with me as an instance of what I mean. Afterwards you do not look back on such events as mere past things whose position in time can be localised; you still feel as living the power that first awoke in them. Now if such moments could be preserved, and the rest strained off, none of us could wish for anything better. . . . And just as these moments of joy or elevation may fill our own lives, so, too, they may be prolonged in the experience of our friends, and, exercising their power in those lives, may know a continual resurrection. You won't mind a personal illustration. I know that one of the ways I live in the truest sense is in the enjoyment of music. Now just

as the first hearing of the Requiem was for me more than an event which passed away, so I would like to hope that my love of music might be for those who love and survive me more than a memory of something past, a power rather that can enhance for them the beauty of music itself. Or, again, we love the South Down country. Now I would hate to think that, if I died, the 'associations' would make these hills 'too painful' for you, as people sometimes say. I would like to think the opposite, that the joy I had in the Downs might not merely be remembered by you as a fact in the past, but rather be, as it were, transfused into you and give a new quality of happiness to your holidays there. . . . Will you at least try, if I am killed, not to let the things I have loved cause you pain, but rather to get increased enjoyment from the Sussex Downs or from Janie* singing Folk songs, because I have found such joy in them, and in that way the joy I have found can continue to live.

And again, do not have all this solemn funeral music, Dead Marches, and so on, played over me as if to proclaim that all has

*A pet name for his youngest sister.

now come to an end, and nothing better remains to those who loved one than a dignified sorrow. I would rather have the Dutch Easter Carol, where the music gives you the idea of life and joy springing up continually.

And if what I have written seems unreal and fantastic to you, at least there's one thing with which you'll agree. The will to serve now is in both of us, and you approve of what I'm doing. Now that is just one of the true and vital things that must not be, and is not, exhausted by the moment at which it is felt or expressed. My resolution can live on in yours, even if I am taken, and, in your refusal to regret what we know to have been a right decision, it can prove itself undefeated by death.

Please forgive me if I have worried you by all this talk. If we loved one another less I could not have written this, and, just because we love one another, I cannot bear to think that, if I died, I should only give you trouble and sorrow. . .

All my love to you,

ARTHUR.

July 13th, 1915.

My dear Dad,

I started this letter two days ago—whence the date—but have been delayed till now. We are at present in Brigade reserve, but we are having a harder time—at least the men are—than when we are actually in the trenches. For every night there are working parties out from 8 to 3 a.m., digging or improving the works somewhere, and altogether it is more trying for them than actual trench work, and only a little less dangerous. We are going right up soon, and I shall not altogether be sorry. The trenches we are occupying are to the right of where we were before, so, if you guessed that, you'll be able to guess this. My Company is again unfortunate to have the nastiest bit of the line, but we have good subsidiary defensive works now. Two nights ago, as I was going up with a working party, I began to think we were going bang into the big German offensive. For a furious fusillade—rifles and machine-guns, with some shelling—began, rockets went up to call on the artillery, and generally there was no end of a row. But it passed over in half-an-hour or so, and I don't think either side can have suffered

much damage. I believe I started to thank you for investing my money. I'll do so now, anyway, and stop this letter to eat lunch.

Love to all, from

ARTHUR.

July 23rd, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

It seems a long time since I have written to you, though I don't think it can be more than a week. We have had six days in the trenches, and letter writing was very hard to find time for. As I think I told you, we had six days before that of rather vigorous trench digging. So the twelve days together left us fairly tired. Unfortunately, the real rest cannot come just yet, for the trenches are not finished, and the reserves will have to get to work on them continually till they are done. However, I am having at least a few hours' rest here, and I ought to tell you about it at once. They shelled our billet this morning rather vigorously. We got the men out partly in trenches, and partly in hedges, &c., and I'm glad to say the damage done was very small. But I had

the misfortune to have a tiny piece of shrapnel hit me. It is the slightest thing—only a little scalp wound. Mann, who was standing near me, and one of my corporals put on my field dressing, and I spent an hour or more moving about and looking after things till the doctor saw me. When he looked at it, however, he said it ought to be dressed properly, and so I've been sent back here just for a day or two in an officers' convalescent home, with a garden and a general degree of comfort that makes me think myself lucky to have had the hit. I would not bother to tell you about it at all, but my name will appear among the wounded, so I'm writing at once to tell you that it is the slightest thing, and that I shan't have to go further back than this, and that I shall be back to duty, if not to-morrow, the day after. So I am attaining the dignity of an appearance in the casualty lists and the comfort of a day's rest at an absolute minimum of inconvenience. I am really extremely fortunate, and my chief sorrow is that I shall miss my post for a day or two. If anything important comes, therefore, which I don't answer at once, you will know why there is this small delay. However, I expect that to-morrow will

see me back again. The trenches I was in this time were more remarkable than the last by long odds. In front of the main line were two dilapidated houses, or ruins rather, which were close to a junction of road and railway. Trenches had been captured from the Germans here, and built up in the oddest fragments round the houses. The German lines were twenty-five to forty yards away, and in between us were two mine craters, one made some time ago, the other made by the Germans last week. I went out to examine the second with two Engineer officers, and that was my only expedition of any interest during our time in the trenches. The rest of the time I spent largely in schemes for making the position safer and more comfortable. You really want to be an engineer, carpenter, and military expert all in one for this kind of work, and, even so, you need to be a great hand at improvising Uncle Podger schemes, for the Germans are too near to do much work outside the trenches, as is the correct method. We've done our best, and in a little while the places will be fit to live in at any rate, though the problem of drainage is insoluble. It rained hard the day we relieved our predecessors, and

the next day. The mud, even with that short fall, was incredible. Thick, clayey, sticky stuff that seemed impossible to remove. I was never more thankful than when the weather cleared. We came back into billets in heavy rain, too, and there have been showers to-day. But there is a pleasant wind at any rate, and, here in the garden from which I'm writing this, the war seems quiet again, and only the white turban around my head does much to remind me of it. You'll be back from Seaton now, and I hope you will have really benefited by the change. Don't over-work or worry and so spoil the holiday. Affairs in England seem rather bad, and the news-papers, or at any rate the Northcliffe section of them, do their best to make things worse. But, even though Russia collapses, as seems to me extremely probable, we are not done in yet.

Thank you so much for your letters and gifts. Don't send me any more sweets just at present, for I have all I want, or at least they are in the Company mess-basket close at hand. A cake now and then is the most welcome addition to our stores, and our friends have supplied us lavishly. I am very fond,

too, of those de Reske cigarettes Margie sent me, and, in any case, they were more welcome than tobacco would have been, for I still have plenty of the Gold Flake. A pipe is really what I would most like if you could send me one, and any magazines or paper-backed Sherlock Holmes' stories would be, I am sure, welcome gifts for the men—not that they have much time to read now-a-days. But their friends send them cigarettes and cakes, and, if I give them things, I would rather supply them with a little literature than anything else. Illustrated papers they are especially fond of.

Good-bye, my dear, for the present. I will write to-morrow and say if my 'wound' permits of my going back then to duty.

Much love from,

ARTHUR.

July, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I think my last line to you was from my hospital last Friday. That is nearly a week ago, and I feel that I ought to have written

to you again since then. But I've been seedy ever since. I was sent back on Saturday, and my head only had to be dressed once or twice more. I've just got plaster on it now, and it is healing fast. But while at the hospital I developed trench fever, which is a complaint very common out here, but successfully avoided by me till now. . . . This morning I came to see the doctor, and he is keeping me at Headquarters for the night. I can have a bed to sleep on here, and I'm taking his medicine and eating very little. I hope that will effect the cure I'm needing, for it is a very weakening thing when it goes on long. . . . I do not know whether it was my little wound that helped to produce it, or what. Well, this is rather dull news, but, to tell the truth, I've little else. The place where we were billeted was not shelled after I came back to it, and life was pretty quiet. Constant fatigue parties, for we are very busy trench digging, and otherwise nothing to do. Where I am now—or rather where I should be if I hadn't gone sick—is in a 'fort' behind the lines, one of the places built to be held to the last if the enemy broke through, and hold up his attack. It's now being constructed by our men and the

engineers. So life for our men will here continue to be what it was in billets—trench digging, varied by sleep. It is a monotonous and rather exhausting *régime*, and I shall be glad if they are given a proper rest soon. However, I must admit that I see no sign of it. . . . The country is particularly flat here, the only decent hill being well away to the north. Heavy clay soil, thoroughly water-logged: a fearful quagmire with a little rain. Very rich crops, and the harvest now near at hand. I do not know when it will be gathered or by whom, but some of the peasants have already begun reaping, well within the artillery area. The town* you mentioned has been rather heavily shelled lately. If we wrote *communiqués* like the French, it would appear pretty regularly like the bombardment of Soissons. Not much damage is really done, but the shops are mostly closed. The shop I bought your present from had put up its shutters the last time I was there. What remain mostly cater as well as they can for the English soldiers, and you will be glad to hear that there is one quite decent officers' tea-shop. The rest of the civilians either have

* Armentières.

moved out already, or are moving now. I went there for a bath last Friday, and they had the bad taste to drop several shells just near the house where I was washing. I don't pretend not to be alarmed by shells: the whistle and bang are so alarming for one thing. But, after all, there is surprisingly little harm done, except if they are lucky enough to catch troops or transport on the road. On the whole, the job I like least here is marching the men about shell-haunted roads. One man will probably escape, or, if he is hit, after all he is only one. But with a platoon you might, if you were unlucky, lose pretty well half from one shell-burst, and I find the worry of it a considerable strain on the nerves. I can see no clear signs—nor hear of any, which is more important, as we see extraordinarily little—of the great German offensive, nor yet of our own big move. Both sides are digging hard, and, from the sort of thing now going on, you would expect the position to remain unchanged for another six months. Probably, after we've worked incessantly at our lines for a month or two, they will move us somewhere else, and the whole thing will begin again. I can hardly believe that it is lack of munitions

holding us up. Perhaps they think that we must have even vaster stores before a real offensive: perhaps they have decided that the war of attrition is still our game. I don't pretend to know, and feel now completely baffled by the war. I suppose that somebody knows what is happening. The Russians seem to be making a struggle, but I can't believe myself that they will save Warsaw, and feel doubtful whether they will even save their armies. The whole thing resolves itself down to the hope that the Germans may be losing more than the Allies. But I don't know in the least whether that is so. What one would like is two or three months really savage fighting followed by peace. But no one I know considers that probable, and certainly I don't. Well, I hope this is not too dismal a letter. I am getting better fast, and expect to go back to duty to-morrow. We have really been lucky with casualties, not having lost an officer yet, and fewer men, I should think, than the other regiments of the brigade. Health is good, too, and we are all quite cheerful and happy. The only depressing thing is the steady loss of men, which of course you must have in a campaign of this kind, but which

becomes, all the same, almost more depressing than the loss of a far larger percentage in some big battle. Thank you for all the gifts. Please do not send me any more tobacco at present, for I've not nearly finished what I have got. What I should really like is a pipe, because my pipe went and got lost. I believe a cake came to me from Frankie Smith. Would you thank him from me, if that is the case? The trouble is I can't be sure. We put our cakes and provisions into the Company mess-basket, and it sometimes becomes impossible to remember which is which. I'm so glad you liked Seaton. Give my love to Alice and the baby. I do hope they will like their new home. I gather that Tom is going straight through with his course now. I should certainly think that the right thing. This war might last almost any time, as far as I can see, and he will be of much greater value fully qualified than half qualified. Mrs. Medley is sending me some Devonshire cream. Isn't that nice of her? And don't we have luxuries? Really, it is the oddest kind of fighting. The 'stagnation of the trenches' means a state of things where the Huns let off eighty rifle grenades one night at our little bit of

trench. Yet for long periods of the day there will be practically nothing doing—we have food in the trenches almost as good as in billets, and last night, in a lucid interval in the fusillade, I heard a distant church clock peacefully strike eleven. A funny life!

With my love to all,

ARTHUR.

August 3rd, 1915.

MY DEAR MARGARET,*

You deserve a letter for yourself, after all the interesting things you've told me. My wound was a very slight affair, though I feel hurt that they delay so long in reporting it. What a lot I shall be able to excuse by it in future years. Every time I want to be quiet by myself, it will start burning, and people will say 'Mustn't argue too much with him, poor fellow. He's rather touchy, you know, after that wound in his head: yes, better give him all the strawberries.' Unfortunately, it was succeeded by 'toxic diarrhœa,' a trench

* His sister.

fever which laid me out for a week, and was only cured by fasting and the doctor's Scotch accent. I am better now, and feel fitter than for a week past, but what rotten luck to get these diseases when my Company is in reserve! As a matter of fact, it's better so, for one feels an awful brute to go sick and leave one's work to one's brother officers. Luckily, this time there has been no work to do. I wonder if you've started making maps—a most useful occupation. I wish I was better at it. I spent hours the other day taking bearings to find at what precise angle a mine crater cut a railway. But it was too difficult. When I had my bearings I could not plot them. I must think out a better method of solving such questions. Have you any advice? Ought one to take a base, and get the bearings from both ends? I suppose that is the right way to do it, but a base is not an easy thing to get in a trench thirty yards from the enemy. And bearings taken through the periscope are apt to deceive. I begin to think I must get a very fine telescopic periscope, of which there are some specimens round here. The sort advertised in *Land and Water* doesn't seem to be very practical. The mirrors would always

get broken. In many ways the box periscope seems to me the best—especially as you can lower the slide most of the way down the bottom mirror, in case the exposed mirror is shot over you—which is quite apt to happen. The German snipers are good, though I think ours are beginning to get the upper hand. In any case, when you have telescopic sights, it is more a question of concealment and patience than of fine marksmanship. There was a tremendous artillery duel the other night. We began it, and for a quarter-of-an-hour we went on being as frightful as we could. The Huns did their little best, and I, who had meant to be a spectator from the support trenches—with the aid of a periscope *bien entendu*—found myself reduced to crouch for my life while the shrapnel whistled overhead, and high explosive shook the ground. Most nerve racking, but comparatively harmless. The Germans, by the way, have learnt so little from the *Daily Mail* that they continue to use shrapnel in vast quantities, even against trenches. Some day Lord Northcliffe will teach them better. In the distance I hear melancholy voices singing 'The Rosary.' I shall be glad when they get back to 'Missis-

sippi.' But it is well to be able to sing at all, for the rain is driving furiously before a fierce wind, and Flanders, which is naturally a quagmire, will soon return to its worst traditions. I should like to withdraw the armies and have the whole place properly drained—or, still better, buried under the sea. I am wanted, and must stop. My love to you and to all of them.

ARTHUR.

August 3rd, 1915.

MY DEAR MRS. TOYNBEE,

Thank you. One simply lives for letters here, and chocolate is good, too, very good. I am writing from a very comfortable room in a farm-house; furniture largely flycatchers, but good of its kind; food excellent, and life as quiet as you could want it, except for an occasional shell. The inhabitants are two Belgian girls, refugees from Comines. Their uncle lives in a town near here, and a farm labourer in a neighbouring cottage does the harvesting. Harvest is being gathered in rapidly. As soon as it is finished, most of the peasants will go away, I think. Already, a

lot of the people round are finding the shells too much for their nerves; so should I if I were they. If you aren't trying to kill the Germans, there is no object in staying here. The country resembles the English Midlands at their worst. But it is very rich and prosperous, full of fine big farmsteads, like the one I am writing from, and, if rich crops can compensate you for living in a waterlogged quagmire, you might find the district worth consideration. . . . Nothing exciting has happened lately, except a huge artillery bombardment the other evening, when every imaginable fire was let loose on our side, and a fairly vigorous reply made from theirs. I believe it was a fine sight, the air full of every colour in smoke. But I was right up in our line, and had to crouch down in the trenches and pray that no German shrapnel should find me. The Germans have not had the advantage of Lord Northcliffe to educate them, and so they let off shrapnel at us continually, quite forgetting that it is useless in modern warfare, and they even kill men by their obsolete methods occasionally. Trench war is a very cold-blooded affair. You hide yourself as carefully as you can, and wait all day to catch an unwary

enemy. If you are two hundred yards away, shells will keep up your death-roll; if only fifty, rifle grenades will do their best. Either way, you have a fairly steady wastage, and all your casualties can be seen and studied, because you aren't in a hurry to advance or retire as you might be in open campaigning. The snipers on both sides watch with telescopic sights for an injudicious head. And you only get a little fun and movement at night, when you can go out and crawl round and try to find out, more by your ears than your eyes, what the enemy is doing. Essentially, I think, a war for the phlegmatic and callous. I shall be happier when I don't mind the sight of a man with his head blown clean off. For the rest, it is more amusing, I should say, for the officer, who at least can try and think out schemes for his little bit of trench, than for the Tommies, who dig, dig, dig, from morning to night. On the whole, they remain remarkably cheerful, but I don't think any of us look forward much to the winter. How ruinous, too, this sort of war must be for troops. I mean ruinous for all other kinds of war. They necessarily lose marching power and the charging spirit, though they must, of course, acquire

great skill and experience in this peculiar kind of fighting. What is not always realised is that all these weeks, when the official *communiqués* say 'Nothing to report,' rifle fire, grenade fire, bombing parties, shell fire, go on continuously, and both sides are certainly losing at a rate of anything from fifty to seventy per cent. per year, leaving disease out of the count. However, if attrition is the watchword, I think they will waste away before us. What you say of London and Oxford is very interesting. Personally, I always prefer London to Oxford, though I don't think I feel the dead bones rattling in Oxford so much as you do. No doubt you get experiences here that you don't there, but a little of the trenches goes a very long way, and, as for peace soldiering, I would rather be buried alive in the Bodleian than face thirty years of it, as some of my superior officers have done. I agree that Oxford will be a very queer place after the war. These last four years I have had some very intimate friends among undergraduates, and, on the whole, I think I've seen Oxford chiefly from their point of view: and, to them, the place is anything but dead. After the war I shall be middle aged, and it

will be different. But though there are a great many other things I should like to do, I'm afraid that at the end there's a good deal of the bookworm about me. It's been suppressed last year, anyway, and worse at home than here, for I've found time here to read quite a lot of novels, mostly very bad ones. I wonder if Turgenev would be good for the trenches—what do you think? I've never read him, nor, indeed, any of the Russian novelists. I love Russian opera, but I suppose Russian novels are nothing like it. Anyway, don't suggest that I should read 'War and Peace.' If one makes ambitious plans like that, one certainly gets killed in the middle. I should love to meet your son. My niece is almost the same adorable age. The last time I was at home she had just learnt to walk, and we went endless tours round the house looking at nothing with unbroken gravity. May the Bulgarians be converted, and all war work, secret or otherwise, flourish.

My thanks and best wishes,

Yours,

A. G. Heath.

August, 1915.

My dear Mother,

Now that I have finished censoring about twenty letters from my men to their girls and relatives, I think it's about time I wrote you a line myself. We are still where we were in my last letter. We expected to have moved on by now, but some changes were made in our movements. There has been very big fighting the last two days, especially, I think, round La Bassée, and I suppose that for the moment we should have been more in the way than not. But I expect our turn will come fairly soon. Since I got back from Hospital, I have lived here a quiet, happy life. I have learnt Morse now, which may be useful at any time, especially if I have to earn my living in future as a telegraphist. The other evening Mlle. de Coninck, in whose house, as I've told you, we have our mess, invited me to play her piano. A poor instrument, but she had a complete set of Chopin's works, and I enjoyed myself considerably. The weather is really beautiful, still warm, but with a pleasant wind. There was tremendous booming of guns last night, but to-day all is quiet. Perhaps they are getting ready for some frightfulness this

evening. I hear strong rumours that the next division of Kitchener's armies to move after us went to the Dardanelles, but I don't know for certain. There is a lot more fuss about machine-guns. I think that I shall not be so very long before I get a machine-gun job permanently, for they have now put on a second officer for good, thereby bringing my turn considerably nearer. But airships are the real game. I have been envious of the flying men ever since I came out here; so cool and rapid. Did I tell you that Naomi Haldane had sent me a respirator, with full directions from her father about using it? In addition to which they have issued us now an improved pattern of smoke helmets. So I am really pretty well armed against the gas. I do hope you are enjoying the strawberry season. They don't grow this way, but from the signs of the weather I should think it would be a record good season in England. Make the most of it. Our Company mess, which is run by Harris, is good and cheap, and I like my food better than at Aldershot. Last week's escapade has left me with an occasional swimminess, like what comes after influenza, but nothing worse. A place like this is even worse

for rumours than England. The motor transport, always rolling to and fro, takes gigantic cargoes of lies with it. La Bassée, in particular, is taken every twenty-four hours. But I really think there must be biggish movements on foot somewhere. Well, many thanks again for all the most welcome gifts you have sent, and my best love to you all.

ARTHUR.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR DAD,

Many thanks for the parcel, which was full of the most useful gifts. The books I've already distributed among my platoon, the pipe I've begun to smoke with no disastrous consequences, and the cake will be a very welcome addition to our stores. I've had another parcel from the Murrays, and Mrs. Medley has sent me some Devonshire cream: so generally I've been in luck lately. . . . It was quite jolly at Battalion Headquarters, where I made my cure. I love our doctor, and the Commanding Officer is a real gentleman. So, generally, I feel much happier than a week

ago. Possibly the fever had something to do with my wound, which I am indignant to find not yet put in the papers—probably not. Anyway, I hope it is now past history. Life has been very quiet in the trenches this tour, except one evening when our artillery went for them hammer and tongs—field guns, howitzers, and trench mortars blowing up every kind of smoke, green, purple, and black, and answered by the Germans rather ineffectively. I went up to the support trenches to get a look, but after a while the German reply grew too hot, and we had to lie down in the trench, and wonder why the Germans will make such a noise. We had practically no damage done to us, and I think they had really very little. Nothing suffered much, except men's nerves. But it was good practice for what might come some day. Apart from that, they are letting our snipers kill more of them than they kill of us, and generally they have been unusually quiet, though, of course, the usual shelling continues. All round us they are making the harvest with a promptness you never found in the English farmer. Right up, in rifle range as well as artillery. Now and then a peasant gets hit, but not very often, and, of course, it will mean

a lot for them to get their crops in. I'm now back with half my Company in a farm occupied by two girls who are going to England next week. Their parents are in a town now occupied by the Germans. Their uncle lives close here, and is the owner of the farm. A trusted farm hand is going to get in the crops, and there you are. A queer life, isn't it? I am giving them good advice how to prepare the farm for American tourists next year, or will it be in two years time? I think the Russians will be very lucky if they save their armies—Warsaw, of course, has been doomed for weeks. The German attack has really been magnificent—the finest military feat of the war, I should think, for the majority of their troops are still on this front, and the Austrians do not seem to be too reliable. Well, it puts back the end of the war, but, now that a winter campaign is certain in any case, I regard that with resignation. The only thing that baffles me is how the campaign can ever be settled by the strategy at present in favour. Neither German methods, nor our own, do more than make minute changes and, short of some blood-curdling invention like a new gas, I really don't see how the thing will be de-

cided. As for gas, I'm beginning to have grave doubts. The Germans have used a particularly cruel kind, but if you could use something equally deadly but more humane, after all that would be a better way of killing men than tearing them limb from limb, as the guns do. I am trying to harden myself to the sight of mangled bodies, but don't find it at all easy. . . .

Yours, with much love,

ARTHUR.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR TOM,

This is a letter I wrote for——[a brother officer] who wanted one sent to some friends who had sent him a cake. He won't send it, so you may as well see it. It is exactly modelled on the letters you have to censor for your men.

Love from

ARTHUR.

DEAR MRS

Just a few loving lines in answer to your kind and loving letter and Thanking you for the two beautiful parcels which has come in very handy, the Cake

was quite unbroken and me and my mates enjoyed it very much in the trenches. Dear Mrs we have been six days and nights under fire, but the Germans will never advance hear they are afraid of our rifle fire. I keeps popping off at them all through the night and they keeps their nappers low you can bet. All the boys are well and in the best of spirits. It is a bit OT hear but we are doing our bit and dear Mrs I am surprised that Tom Grayson has not yet enlisted. I call it a big shame four of us from one family Out here bearing the blunt and him crawling round the pubs and won't even send me a Woodbine. dear Mrs you know young Ginger Dempster as was my mate he as gone to the salvidge collecting old iron from the German canons they are busted up all round hear something awful. We are back now for a bit of a rest and we can do with it too but every night we dig trenches under fire. We shall go into the trenches again soon and after that we come home on leave so that I shall see you and the two dear Babies again. Ho what joyfull times we shall have when this is all over. We are fed up with it but we keep smiling. Dear Mrs I will now close for the censor will not let us say anything. Hoping you are in the Pink as it leaves me,

From your ever lovin

BROTHER-IN-LAW.

August 7th, 1915.

MY DEAR LADY MARY,

You have ordered me not to thank you for your presents, but even ingratitude has its limits, and when you send me a complete

medicine chest, I feel that I must at least acknowledge it. It really is wonderfully good of you, and makes me feel a hypocrite, for I'm now quite recovered . . . and, if all your specifics don't raise me to a degree of fitness that will make me a reproach and a byword among all my neighbours, then my body is not worth troubling about. . . . The weather is rather uncertain, probably because the wretched farmers are trying to get their crops in: magnificent crops, too, the one redeeming feature of this desolate country. I've had little to do the last ten days, and read more than at any time since last September—in fact, since before the war. But we're going up in the trenches again, and this time I shall not be at Headquarters, but right up in front with my platoon. I've heard from Cheesman, on his way to the Dardanelles, and eagerly looking forward to reconquering the capital of the Roman Empire. Gater was ahead of him, I think. I'm inclined to envy them, because the Dardanelles is our real offensive at present, and any sane man would prefer attack to defence. I've just been reading Buchan's 'History of the War'—good, don't you think, considering—and feel more than ever what a

lot one would give for a fortnight's campaigning like the fighting from Mons to the Marne. However, I've not given up all hope for it yet. How funny the papers are now-a-days. Our transport officer—a delightful ex-N.C.O.—studied for some time an extraordinary diagram in the *Daily Mail* calculating the cost of killing a single English or German soldier. 'I suppose some ass, who'd got nothing to do, went and drawed this,' he said at last, and I felt his remark threw a just light on our journalists. L. G.'s speech to the mine-owners seemed to me quite wonderful, thrilling even to read. . . . It is rather grim to read—as censor—a very affectionate letter from one of our snipers, a most charming man in every way, to his grandmother, in which, after lots of home gossip, he says, 'I'm getting on well at my job, and have accounted for four now.' They compete with one another, and you can hear long arguments between one man, who says he is three up, and another, who contests it. Murder in cold blood it is, and you may sit, as I did once, for hours together watching for an unfortunate enemy to put his head up in a gap you have discovered. All the same, we are really far too humane, and should win

this war much more quickly and certainly if we would forestall German 'atrocities' instead of copying them. Our doctor, who is a mining expert, was at first very indignant about their use of gas. Now that he has seen some of the shell wounds, he doesn't think there's much need to grumble.

Yours ever,

A. G. HEATH.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR MURRAY,

I'm afraid you must have been having a bad time, all of you, and Agnes especially. I would have liked a week in the London wards, before coming out here, to get used to the sights, but I think the hardening process is rapid. It was so interesting, too, to hear about Basil and his love of poetry. Did it start suddenly, or has he always had it? I feel inquisitive, because I remember still so vividly the first time I read a poem with delight. I remember time, place, circumstances, and everything. It was a pure accident, my finding the

book—Keats' 'Eve of St. Agnes'—and the whole experience exactly like 'conversion,' because I'd never cared two straws for poetry before, and now seemed to get a new sense. Perhaps the lovely lines about the cakes at the end did the trick. But I expect Basil is like most lovers of poetry, and has always had the taste. . . . If I ever feel that, as one of my men puts it, the last seven or eight years of the war will be the worst, a little Peptonised Cocoa, followed by Brand's Essence of Beef, Horlick's Malted Milk, and Benger's Food, crowned with a good stiff dose of Easton Syrup and Regesan, will make me as big and blonde a beast as Nietzsche ever grew hysterical over, fit to fight for ever and ever, and cocking my revolver as soon as I hear the name of Morel or Ramsay Macdonald. . . .

My love to you all.

Yours,

A. G. Heath.

August, 1915.

My dear Mother,

I am sitting in a high position in the trenches, where there was once a house. Again near the German lines, which are about thirty to forty yards from us. But, except for the artillery, all is quiet. Last night our guns caught them coming up to relieve the trenches, and did considerable execution. Since then there has been trouble. But all the shells go beyond the lines, so there is no cause for us to grumble. We have had a quiet time on the whole, but I'm sorry to say Mann has been wounded. It is not dangerous, but it is a real bad wound, not a little scratch like mine. He has been shot through the toes and leg, and suffered from compound fracture of the leg. The doctor says that it will heal up and leave the leg as strong as ever, but, meanwhile, he will be an interesting invalid for the next three months or so. He got the wound while out in front of the parapet with a small working party. There is still a great deal of work going on in the trenches, and behind it all there is the great problem of drainage in the winter now looming up. It would be jolly to feel, as in the Dardanelles, that by Christmas a deci-

sive victory would have been obtained. But I suppose we must be less ambitious. Sorry —I'm called off and can write no more to-day. This will let you know the will, anyway.

Love, from

ARTHUR.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Just back from the trenches, and my first job shall be to finish the letter I was writing to you. Since I began, what the men would call 'your kind and welcome letter' arrived, and I hasten to answer it. Please don't think I am averse to leaving Bromley. On the other hand, I want you very much to be nearer Alice and the baby. It was good news indeed that you will be within sixpence of her. My sentimental liking for Bromley is, no doubt, greater because I'm only there on holidays, or at least in the Vac. I always remember the first explorations of the country round, when I first got my bicycle, and was just about to go up to Oxford. It still seems to me very beautiful, and I like the feeling of being near the downs.

But I couldn't for a moment stick out for that, rather than gain the great advantage of being near Alice and the Hospital. I wonder how expenses compare. To tell you the truth, I'm not altogether sorry that you will have these moves during the war. After all, it's something to take one's thoughts off what is happening in the war. For some reason I cannot understand—partly Lord Northcliffe—everybody in England seems much depressed just now. Personally, I've been expecting far worse things to happen to the Russians for some time yet, and, even now, I don't feel sure that they will escape. But their chances are brighter, and, so long as they keep their armies in force, Germany is not only foiled, but has wasted vast numbers of men to obtain no decisive result. The excitements of the next few months are, I'm convinced, going to be in the Balkans. People, who keep on asking what we are doing for Russia, forget that our Dardanelles expedition is now taking a really big scale. I should think our troops there are, by now, half as many as our troops here. I'm inclined to envy them, for they will soon have the honour of conquest, while we shall be merely the containing force. But I shall be

bitterly disappointed if we are not in possession of Constantinople by December, and that ought to loose the Balkan League full tilt on Austria. Well, our last tour in the trenches was very quiet, except for work in the trenches, of which there was a tremendous quantity—a good deal of working just outside, too, but, except for poor Mann's wound, it was managed quite safely. I've not heard from him, but I know he has gone back from Bailleul, where they took him first. Probably he will be in England by now. We had a little excitement before we came out. My sentries thought they saw men in a group of trees behind the German lines, working as if on a platform. I got the machine-gun officer to fire on it, and also warned the artillery in case anything should happen. I do not know whether our gun did any damage on the lines—at the least it will teach them to be careful how they use it. You would be surprised how long and difficult a job it is to get guns, or even machine-guns, on to a target just discovered. You have to find the officer or the telephone leading to him. You have to explain accurately where you are, at what you are looking, and, if possible, take bearings on to it—a difficult task through a

periscope. And as your Company alone is probably holding 300 or 400 yards of trench, and there is probably no telephone straight on to the machine-gun officer, and what telephones there are will be some way behind your line, not right up where you are standing, you can understand that there are considerable difficulties in the way. But I always like sentries to pick up something, even if they only get hold of false alarms. It shows, at least, that they are awake and on the alert. As a matter of fact, our men are very good, watching keenly, and still quite interested in what they see. Our snipers have also been very active lately, and injudicious Germans who showed themselves above the parapet have been hit. It's a queer kind of war, one side waiting for the other's rashness, and then pouncing. Rifle grenades or trench-mortar bombs, of course, can be landed right in the trenches, and therefore form an offensive weapon that does not depend on the enemy's rashness. But we had very few of them this time. Please do not call your parcels meagre. They are most generous, and I don't want packs of things I can't carry. But I wonder if you would mind my saying definitely what

I have found most useful and pleasant? First, I don't want any more chocolate. Chocolate is very good on the march, but I don't so much care for it in this trench fighting—anyway, I have got plenty. Secondly, the cakes are most welcome, and the best sort of cake is one that keeps fairly hard or solid. A tin of short-bread would be excellent, but the cakes you have sent have been beautiful and much appreciated. Thirdly, I should like some of that tinned *café-au-lait*—'Milkmaid,' it is called, I think, and you or some other kind person sent me some, which I enjoyed. I get sick of tea. The whole question of drinks is very complicated. Water from the carts is very insipid, and elsewhere is dangerous. Perrier Water we drink chiefly, but it wants something mixed with it. I don't care about whisky, except when I am ill. The wine of the country is rather sour stuff. I hate drinking beer, and one cannot always be drinking tea. *Café-au-lait*, in that tinned form, would be most welcome, and there is also a mixture called Glass Lemon which makes tolerable lemonade, and I like it quite well. Then I wonder if you would mind sending out my Sam Browne belt. It is much handier than

our equipment, and would often be useful. I've got all the books I need now, and shall soon send some back home. Mrs. Toynbee sent me a couple of Turgenev's works. Thank you so much for the books you collected for me. I've given them out among the men, and I think they will be sure to enjoy them. I wonder if I might ask for some special books—(1) 'Catriona,' (2) 'The Wrong Box,' (3) 'Adventures of Sherlock Holmes,' (4) 'Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes,' (5) 'Hound of the Baskervilles.' I know that all of them are in paper-back editions, and I should like to see if my men would care for them. This is a dreadful begging letter, but you say you would like to know what I find most useful, and so there you are. A thunderstorm is now raging—a thing I don't care about, for it is so difficult to tell whether it is thunder or shells, and, if it is shells, a strategic retirement to the dug-outs round the farm would be advisable. However, for the present it's certainly thunder.

I hope there won't now be a hitch in the negotiations. It is a great thing to have found a good house, and I think the description of it sounds excellent. Without a map I've only the vaguest idea of where the place is, but I

know the country near Enfield is quite pleasant. Also the Lea must be a few miles off, and a river is always a gain. It is also an advantage coming to King's Cross, rather than Liverpool Street, as King's Cross is so much likelier a starting point of journeys (except for Cambridge). Altogether, the North will be a change again. But what is this you say about five years being a long time at your age? Really, to hear you talk, anyone would suppose you were eighty. Five years is a good long time for anyone—a year more than my time at Oxford as a don, which, on looking back, already seems to me a good long time. But anyone might suppose you were Methuselah and his wife from the tone of your letter, instead of a comfortable middle-aged pair whom no one has yet called old, not even the baby. I hope the baby will like her new home, and not sigh for the mud of Islington. My best love to you. I will write soon to Margie, who sent me a lovely long letter.

Yours,
ARTHUR.

P.S.—I would also like one pair of pyjamas, for, though of course we cannot wear

them in the trenches, and ought not to wear them here either, we may go back sometimes. In fact, there are strong rumours that we shall get a rest in about a fortnight's time. If so, I should very much like them. Please excuse all these requests.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR MISS BLOMFIELD,

You wrote me a most stoical letter, but, from what I hear elsewhere, you have had a bad time, teaching ninety-three turbulent women to knit when they have all got tuberculosis or something of the kind. I would be sorry for you were it not that, if you had gone to Serbia, I believe you would have had it still worse. Of course, you'd have had better country. I often think that of this Flanders plain. If we were in the Dardanelles, at least there would be a hill to look at. Still, it's no use grumbling. If it will only stop raining, and let the floods in the trenches subside, I shall not complain. You get some idea, after

these thunderstorms, of what last winter was like. And, as we've got another winter in front of us here, the knowledge is not cheerful. As for my wound, about which you were kind enough to enquire, there was nothing much in it. I was hit in the head by a shell splinter, but it did not go deep, thanks to the peculiar thickness of my skull, and I was only off duty two or three days. I don't want to be knocked out till I've seen some really big fighting. This sort of quiet throat-cutting is not a decent enough kind of war to be destroyed by—especially as half the officers' casualties in our division pretty well have been men shot—often by pure bad luck—while out in front at night. I've had good luck, however, with all my crawls, and the shell hit me when in billets. The troops still pour over. In a few days I hope to be instructing Geoffrey Smith* in trench warfare, just as, three months ago, Gillespie was instructing me. Swarms, too—whom I am inclined to envy—are going to the Dardanelles. I envy them because they will advance and be glorious. But, after all, it doesn't matter very much. Did you know

* Fellow of New College and Captain in the Rifle Brigade. Killed in action, July 10th, 1916.

Horace Brierley*? He has just been killed in the Dardanelles. An ideal soldier, too, simply born for it. Mann, who was in my Company, got hit in the leg by a stray bullet the other night while out in front with a party cutting the grass. The wound was bad—compound fracture of the shin-bone, and he had to be pulled over the parapet coming back, which must have hurt a lot. But, though they sent for his mother and thought his life in danger for a few hours, he will pull round and be quite all right in six months or so. I wonder if the war will look anything nearer an end in six months' time. I find the best thing is to get into as mechanical a way of going on with one's job as possible, and, in the intervals, I find quite a lot of time to read and enjoy myself. I am not sure that there is not a great advantage in the war being unexciting and murderous. Everyone taking part—which means sooner or later most of the available manhood of the European nations—will get heartily sick of it, and, if after that they ever go to war again, they deserve the worst horrors that modern chemis-

* Commoner of New College, 1909—1912; Lieutenant in Lancashire Fusiliers. Killed at the Dardanelles, August 7th, 1915.

try can inflict upon them. We are too humane for this sort of thing. We only copy German 'atrocities' instead of forestalling them. Can you think of any ruses? I want to arrange for the whole Battalion—or, if possible, Brigade—to sneeze at a given moment during the day, giving its snipers precise instructions when they may expect anxious German faces to look up over their parapet and see what is happening. I should also like a large brass band to play 'Deutschland uber alles' out of tune. This could serve a double purpose, for it is the same tune as 'Glorious things of Thee are spoken,' and the C.E. service would never know that the band was out of tune.

Poor fellow, completely off his head. I hope your savage women will not make things too horrible for you. After all have you not known the W.S.P.U.? No matter.

Yours,
A. G. HEATH.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I am writing a short note from the trenches. Weather very hot, with beautiful moonlit nights,

and a day or two ago one of the finest sunsets I've ever known. It is a bit of the line one of our other Companies used to hold. Much less interesting than before, and less work to be done. In the warm weather I am letting the men have a quiet time. Wrong, perhaps, but there is not so much to do here. Yesterday we had a 'strafe' for the first time lately. Trench-mortars and rifle grenades—we had the largest store of the first, and they had more of the second. So honours were not so unequally divided, though, as trench-mortars are the heaviest things, I hope the honours remained with us. None of my men were touched, and the whole company has been remarkably lucky about casualties lately.—I touch wood. A new battalion has been with us for instruction! What hardened warriors we are becoming. Geoffrey Smith was with it, a second Captain. There has been a lot of wit about in the trenches lately. When the news of the Russian—or is it the English?—naval victory in the Baltic came through, we got it from General Headquarters (sent all along the line). A few minutes later I went along the trench and discovered my sergeant shouting in a very shrill squeaky voice through a mega-

phone 'Fritz, your navy is destroyed.' Elsewhere in the line a board was put up:

'The following German ships have been lost—

1 Superdreadnought. Hoch!
3 Cruisers. Hoch! Hoch!
7 T.B.D. Hoch! Hoch! Hoch!'

One of the Germans was heard replying indignantly 'Schwein.' But a more dignified reply was made by a board from the Germans saying that in August 80,000 Russians, and I do not know how many guns, had been captured. Down our way they put up a board with 'Mr. Grey' written on it, and a dreadful face that most resembled Mr. Gladstone disguised as a monkey. However, my men have now constructed the most hideous German figure on Guy Faux lines—face rather like a drooping turnip, and in course of time that shall be exhibited to them. It cheers them up a bit, and that's a blessing. Now my main object is to thank you for the parcels. They have arrived safely, and they are most welcome. I look forward eagerly to the time when the pyjamas can be used, and the rest is being used at once. Might I make another request? Another tin

of Gold Flake. Smoking becomes almost a necessity with all these awful flies. I was much depressed by the Russian news a few days ago, and still do not feel too cheerful about the prospects of their armies. But, if we have to take the war along on our own, after all that's what we did against Napoleon. Mann has written to me. He will not be fit till May, and if the other bone in his leg had been broken instead of cracked the leg would have had to be amputated. Still he is in no danger whatever. Mrs. Mann wrote me a letter from Rouen saying he was going on well. Poor thing! she must have been frightened, and I think views the coming winter with much greater pleasure than her son. No, I'm afraid no leave will be coming along for a long while yet. At present it looks as if we might stay here indefinitely. I should like a change of air, but anywhere else would probably be much more rowdy. What a time they must be having in Gallipoli. Oh! there is yet another want—could you order the *Nation* to be sent out to me weekly—at any rate for a time? I like to read the poor old humanitarians occasionally. Also, would Dad mind telling me if the whole £100 for the Loan was paid out

of my Oxford balance, or is there still some to be met? Margie an investor, too! It's most exciting about the house, and I should much like to have a hand in choosing the designs. I shall present you with an oak settee for the 'lounge hall' when I get back. A white drawing room is very jolly. Would it suit the baby?

My love to you all,

ARTHUR.

My thanks to Auntie Maggie.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

We are out again, and I'm writing to you sitting in the sunshine on the top of a trench round the farm where we were billeted. I never expected to be in the sunshine a few days ago. We were then inches deep in mud, with the rain-storms breaking over the lines, restoring the slush as soon as it began to dry. It gave us some vague idea, at least, of what conditions were like last winter. We relieved

in a rainstorm, it rained all the next day and the day after that, and, finally, on our third night, simply poured and poured. What was most unfortunate of all was that I had not got my Burberry. It had been left in the guard-room and mislaid by the guard, and, when I went for it, I could not find it. It has been recovered since, but those three days I had only an oiled silk sheet, which was too thin and small to do more than protect my shoulders. However, a Burberry would not have been much use if I had one. What one did was to take as much shelter as one could (the dug-outs leaked badly), and hope for fine weather, which fortunately came during the last half of our stay in the trenches. I hate mud, and you get it in this Flanders soil in its very beastliest form. Still, it is now so fine that complaints all ought to be put aside, and, in spite of the weather, there has been no illness nor even serious colds, so I still feel we have very small cause to grumble. The enemy was quiet. The trench mortars, which I think I have told you he had been loosing over rather too freely for our comfort, had apparently gone short of ammunition, and, although he continues rather aimless sniping, not much

damage is done—much less than we inflict. The German snipers do not seem to have very good positions, and they waste a great deal of ammunition firing from their loopholes at our sandbags when there is nobody to be hit above them. Our snipers get more commanding positions than loopholes will give, and they wait for decent targets. I have an old man in my platoon, however, who is not a regular sniper, but does it for his own amusement. He always fires from loopholes, or over the parapet in concealed places, and he enjoys loosing off his rifle so much that he will not wait for heads to appear, but blazes off at where—according to him—German loopholes are to be found, regardless of the ammunition he uses, quite in the German fashion. Then at the end of the day, he remarks with much self-complacency that he has silenced the German snipers. Well, it's a good thing for them to be amused, and I would rather have a man take a little risk now and then, firing at what he thinks a loophole or a periscope, than remain for ever huddled down behind the sandbags quite indignant if anyone on his side fires a shot, for fear that the Germans shall reply. That is the attitude of a lot of the ex-regular N.C.O.'s

especially. This trench life in any case is not good for *morale*. How does anyone suppose the troops will face the open after it? I think I must take more men out on little expeditions at night, just to get them used to the absence of a parapet. But, though I don't mind doing it myself, it is a great nuisance to take men out with you, and one becomes much more afraid of accidents. I did thank you for the books, didn't I? Thank Dad for his letter, which reassured me about my Oxford balance, and Margie for a very long interesting letter. I am glad Alice and the baby are so comfortable. *Land and Water* and the *Nation* have just arrived, for which also many thanks. The prospect of going into Army Reserve has faded altogether. You know the English are taking over many more miles of the line. I suppose the fresh divisions have gone there, and we shall go on here indefinitely. However, apart from rats and occasional shells, there is little to grumble about, and we have an easy time, very different from the poor fellows in the Dardanelles. What a dreadful time the Sherwood Foresters must have had. I was much relieved not to see Gater's name in the casualty lists. I've just had a letter from Alfred

Hamlyn*—training for commission in the D.C.L.I., and at Keble to be instructed. Odd, isn't it?

Much love to all, from

ARTHUR.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR MRS. TOYNBEE,

It's impolite of me not to have thanked you for the Turgenev, but I will do it better when I've read them. I found a lot of very rotten novels by people like Una Silberrad about, and I've spent some time reading them that would better have been given to Turgenev. But one's worst instincts must be satisfied first. Thank you, too, for your letter. I'm very sorry Arnold† takes badly his enforced absence from the war. But, after all, it will be rather interesting to see how near Europe gets to his ideal reconstruction of it. It's quite true what you say about the war. It is horrid for those who stay behind, as well as for those in it. Indeed, one of the worst things for those in

* An old Schoolfellow. Killed in action, July, 1916.

† Mr. Arnold J. Toynbee, Fellow of Balliol College.

it is to know how bad it is for others at home. It is the sort of time when you ought to have been born without a mother. It's still very quiet here, though they have been much too free with a specially nasty kind of large sausage bomb. I'm sorry my account of war here doesn't sound 'encouraging' to you. Everybody is alike. I write what appears to me a very peaceful and jolly description of the trenches, and people write back and say 'Well, you might cheer us up a bit,' or words to that effect. If letters from this part of Flanders have that effect, I hesitate to think what impression can be produced by letters from Gallipoli, where there is really something to grumble about. However, here is one thing I at least find cheerful. I've been reckoning out what sort of reinforcements the Germans would need for this Western front, even though it remained throughout the year as quiet as here, when, as Sir John French continually says, there is no fighting, and losses are caused only by artillery, grenades, and sniping. I will not bore you with all the figures, but I came to the conclusion that their reserves could not last beyond next August, whatever happened to Russia, and even though they

remained strictly on the defensive. Do you think that a small thing? Personally, I've never been so much comforted by arithmetic in my life.

The guns are making an awful row, but there! it's their nature to make a row, and they cannot help it. I wish I were on the Border.* The border of France and Belgium is too ugly for words. However, I've already said that I would rather be here after all—or, perhaps, in Gallipoli. After all, to march victoriously into Constantinople would be a reward for many things. I shan't write you a long letter now, for some time soon I may have some interesting things to say.

Yours,

A. G. HEATH.

August 31st, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Last time I wrote from the trenches. We are in reserve now, but in a day or two we shall be back again. 'Reserve' still means living in

* *I.e.* the Scottish Border, where Mrs. Toynbee was.

a desolate old farm, and doing long fatigue parties at work in the trenches. But really we are having a most luxurious time. Food is excellent, letters and parcels punctual, the kind thought of those at home inexhaustible, and, even in the firing line, the enemy unusually peaceful, except for a nasty habit he has developed of pitching over very large bombs from a trench-mortar. When I think of the time they've been having in the Dardanelles, I begin to wonder whether we here can claim to have been at war at all. Yet, of course, we get our quota of casualties, and you cannot call it peace either exactly. But how much rather I would have a month or two of real campaign, ending in a decision, rather than this indefinite war of 'attrition.' And yet again, it's not indefinite, because, to my great satisfaction, on a long boring working party I calculated that, on the basis of the losses we have (and inflict) in a war where there are no set attacks and defences at all, the Germans will want reinforcements of 1,000,000 on this front alone next year; which reinforcements again they will not be able to provide unless they altogether abjure offensive movements here or anywhere. And that, again, is a policy that would give them

no future, for, the year after, their reserves would fail for even this kind of thing. Therefore, I still think the Germans will batter away for all they are worth and try to make peace, if not in October, at least by Christmas, as the result of the battering. However, I don't think they will succeed in getting it. One thing I now regard as certain, that of the various estimates given of the German losses, the higher estimates alone are worth considering. I cannot give you the exact reason for thinking this, but it is based, as I say, on knowledge of what our losses (and theirs, as far as we know them) have been in two months of trench warfare in a very quiet part of the line, where there have been no battles at all.

Well, I'm afraid this will sound at once oracular and boring. But what am I to say? The hardships, such as they are, resolve themselves now into muddy trenches and fields, and a general lack of sleep in the trenches. In the trenches, life for me consists chiefly in arranging what shall be done by my platoon—remodelling the trenches, making barbed wire, &c.—going round to visit the company sentries, when I am officer of the watch, patrolling in front at night now and then to have a look

round, and generally superintending my platoon's efforts to catch an unsuspecting foe, or listening to the curious alarms and surmises that men, who look long enough into periscopes or the moonlight, are sure to produce for you. It is often very dull, and one would like more sleep than is possible; yet it is wonderful what a lot of little incidents there are. Last time I was very happy high up in an old barn just behind our lines, from which there was a safe and excellent view of the German trenches. I had my first good view of Germans—three running over a rise in the second line, very hurriedly, too hurriedly for me to get a shot in. They did not look particularly old or fat. Here we get now only two or three big working parties, instead of one every night, as it used to be. Apart from them, I have to look at my platoon's rifles, to censor its letters, and that's about all. I'm much more comfortable than I used to be. I used to sleep either outside or on the floor, and I used to keep my clothes on, and only remove my boots with a heavy conscience. Now I've got a sort of chicken wire mattress, on which my valise is laid, and I sleep in pyjamas. So I get really first-rate nights,

except when I'm out on fatigue. There are a lot of toshy novels about, which I have duly read. Rosalind Murray, that was, has sent me two books by Turgenev, and I have ploughed through Buchan's 'History of the War' (six volumes, and no end of names you cannot remember). This will give you an idea of the leisure we get here compared with what was, and, perhaps, with what will be. 'The Oxford Book of Verse' has been such a pleasure in the trenches. I don't get time there to read anything long, and a little poem now and then warms the vitals, as the old lady said of her gin and water. I told you, I think, that I had heard from Mann. It rather surprised me, in Bessie's letter, that he had to be kept in France still for a month or so. I'm afraid it means that the pieces of bone in the wound are very troublesome. What bad luck, when he was so keen on 'getting on with the war.' The Dardanelles' casualty lists cause me daily anxiety now. Gater and Cheesman must have been somewhere in the new landing, and the Sherwood Foresters, I see, have been badly cut up. Well, in some ways, I still envy them, for I do not believe victory is far off them. Do tell me all about the house. It is so

interesting. Why does Janie say to-day that there is not much picture room? Are there no walls, or are they all handsomely panelled, or what? I like the idea of a lounge hall, but wonder where I shall put my dirty boots. Dinner time. I must stop, with my best love to you all.

ARTHUR.

August, 1915.

MY DEAR BARKER,

Ever so many thanks for the letter, and for the promise of books, too. It is good to be able to use one's pen to such purpose, and I wish there were more people writing things that bring wisdom, instead of making one blush, as the English Press does nowadays. I will reward you—or, perhaps, bore you—by sending you what I have just seen placarded up in a French town near here. It is the speech made by M. Paul Deschanel to the Chambre des Députés, announcing Italy's declaration of war.

'Comme il y a cinquante-six ans, l'Italie est avec nous (Tous les Députés se lèvent

et se tournent vers la loge diplomatique. Applaudissements prolongés et cris unanimes et répetés de Vive l'Italie). Toutes les puissances de vie se dressent contre la puissance de mort. Tous les peuples menacés dans leur indépendance, dans leur sécurité, dans leur avenir, se lèvent les uns après les autres contre la domination brutale qui prétend faire la loi au monde. La géographie, l'histoire, la morale, tout ici conspire au même dessein. Comment Rome, mère du droit, eût-elle pu servir les contempteurs des traités et de la foi jurée? Comment les héritiers de la grandeur Vénitienne eussent-ils pu souffrir que l'Adriatique devînt un lac Germanique? Comment la politique fine souple et réaliste de la maison de Savoie, qui n'était entrée dans la triple Alliance que pour se garder contre les corps de l'ennemie séculaire, eût-elle prêté les mains à l'absorption de la Serbie et de la mer Egée par l'avant-garde de l'Allemagne? Comment ceux qui avaient arrêté la conquête Ottomane et ceux qui avaient délivré la Lombardie et la Vénétie eussent-ils aidé les maîtres de la Bosnie Herzogovina, de la Croatie, de la Transylvanie, de la Pologne,

les oppresseurs de Trieste et de Trente, les conquérants des duchés danois et de l'Alsace Lorraine? Comment la fière nation de Manin, de Victor Emmanuel, de Cavour, de Mazzini, de Garibaldi, qui a trouvé sa principale force dans la tradition latine, se fût-elle mise à l'école des Nietzsche, des Treitschke et des Bernhardi? Et par quelle impieté les catholiques Italiens eussent-ils colludé avec les destructeurs fanatiques de Louvain et de Rheims? (Tous les Députés se lèvent. Applaudissements unanimes). Non! non! Rome, qui, après Athènes, fut la source de toute lumière, Rome, qui s'épanouit magnifiquement de siècle en siècle la fleur toujours renaissante de la morale et de la beauté, ne pouvait pas être en ces heures suprêmes avec les cités de la ruse et de la force: la voici à sa vraie place et à son vrai rang avec les patries du droit et de l'idéal, avec les cités éternelles de l'esprit (vifs applaudissements). Et tandis que du fond de l'Océan la plainte des innocentes victimes (vive émotion) le cri des enfants et des mères précipités par un crime atroce remplit de douleur et de colère tout l'univers pensant, la France dont l'indomptable héroïsme a brisé l'effort de la

barbarie, la France qui porte avec une gloire sans égale le poids le plus lourd de la guerre, la France qui verse son sang non seulement pour sa liberté mais pour la liberté des autres et pour l'honneur, la France salue fraternellement comme le présage du droit triomphant le vol des aigles romaines, elle sent battre d'un bout à l'autre de la terre le cœur des peuples frémissants, les uns à qui s'offre l'instant propice, les autres inquiets, les autres meurtris, et s'allumer la révolte de la conscience universelle contre le fol orgueil d'une caste de proie. Et maintenant, ô morts glorieux de Magenta et de Solférino, levez-vous et enflammez de votre souffle magnanime les deux sœurs immortelles, réunies à jamais dans la justice! (Toute la Chambre se lève et acclaime l'Italie. Applaudissements prolongés).'

There, how does that strike you? I hope you don't think it fustian. I think it really superb, and when you come on the walls of a town, whose inhabitants have suffered more from shell-fire than all England from Zeppelin raids, all lined with this flaming rhetoric, you think of what you would see in England—

Northcliffe's posters announcing 'Another Naval Disaster,' or anything else that can depress national spirit! I think that we have done greater deeds, even than the French, but we do not talk as well yet. Besides this speech of Deschanel, there are others on the same subject, and a very fine message from Poincaré to the nation on the anniversary of the war, insisting on national unity, and ending 'La France veut vaincre. Elle vaincra.' I wish we had the same habit. One of Asquith's early speeches, or Sir Edward Grey's last letter, would be better things to stick up on our walls than advertisements of *John Bull.* Well, I meant really to thank you for your letter and pamphlet, not to fill you up with French oratory. But I am full of these speeches just now, having just come back from the town where they were displayed. Life is easy, but monotonous. Trenches always: even in reserve, our working parties go up continually to dig. Germans pretty quiet, though full of nasty habits with bombs. No fighting, in the sense of attacks and defences. But a rate of wastage, which I have calculated to my own satisfaction at least (based on our own losses), will make it impossible for the

Germans to keep up their numbers in the West from their reserves for another year, even if it is all 'stagnant' warfare like this. So I keep cheerful, and like to think of Joffre making up his accounts each day before he turns in for his seven hours' sleep. My chief complaint against the trenches (except when it rains, for then no complaint can be bitter enough) is that seven hours' sleep is there impossible. What a curious piece of irony your pamphlet discloses. Here we have the Germans forced by the highest moral law to spread by conquest 'Deutsche Kultur' in the interests of the conquered nations! Then the next minute they have to expropriate the conquered nations, and bundle them to the U.S.A. in the interests of Deutsche Kultur. I wish they could all be sent, together with Northcliffe and the *Times*, to the South Pole.

My thanks to you. Excuse the oration, if you dislike it, and take it as a sign of my depraved tastes.

Yours,

A. G. HEATH.

September, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I am writing to you on a filthy, dirty piece of paper, but I daresay you would rather have a letter than not, even on the dirty paper. I am at present the proud commander of a 'fort'—a little work behind the lines, from which we shall check and destroy the German advance, if they ever pierce our front line. I am the only officer here, and have been left in lonely grandeur all day. But the less they interfere with me, the better I shall be pleased. You will have gathered that we are in Battalion reserve. To be in reserve—in this sense—means that you are under less danger from bullets, but more from shells, so things are about equal. However, they haven't hurt anybody yet. The chief difference from my ordinary life is that, now I am on my own here, I get bothered by returns and reports, which previously have reached me only indirectly. How dreadfully busy you must be, though I envy you the experience of buying decorations, &c. . . . I never forget the tour Margie and I made round Oxford when I did mine, and the obvious pleasure which a young assistant at Elliston and Cavell's took in our choices,

evidently supposing us to be a newly-married couple. Now I want you to accept a little present from me for the house. How would an oak settee for the ancestral hall do—or a window-seat for some of those innumerable windows? I should think £3 or so would get one or the other, would it not? I should like to contribute something to the furnishing. Anyway, would Dad mind sending me a London and County cheque, and I will fill it up for an amount to cover my insurance money and a bit of furniture. Do please get something. If I were at home I should just buy it and send it on, but here one can get nothing, and I don't like to order things on trust. One other suggestion has occurred to me. Do you think it worth while moving the piano? I've heard it is quite a good time to sell pianos, because of the stoppage of the German supplies. Suppose we sold ours and saved up a bit to buy another. There are often piano sales, and if you would leave it for a bit—at any rate till I come home on leave—I could give you the inestimable privilege of my expert advice in choosing it. I hope you will not think this interference, for of course I see the disadvantage of being without a piano for

a time. But if we are to change at all, this seems a good time for doing it. That ends my suggestions about the house. I think it sounds pretty, and it will be a great thing for you to be nearer Alice. How fortunate it is that her house at Barnet is so pleasant. . . . Please thank Tom for his letter. I like to think of him as a hypnotist, and envy him the experience. I should like to send people to sleep, and cure them of paralysis or other diseases while they are nodding. The lovely weather has broken, but, though it is dull, it is not yet raining. I don't think I will have my overcoat, at any rate not at present. I can put a fleece lining into my Burberry, which then becomes quite warm, and I've ordered a mackintosh cape from the Army Ordnance stores. It is the sort of thing cavalry wear, and it only costs 15/-. I think it ought to be very useful. The greatest problem at present is what to wear in the way of boots when the weather gets really bad. But there is plenty of time still to think it over. Do please let me have the pleasure of presenting something to the house, and don't overwork yourself over the move. My love to you all,

ARTHUR.

September, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

The parcel has just arrived, and is full of most welcome things. I'm well stocked with coffee now, dear, so don't trouble to send any more just yet: also books—I think I've given away enough to my platoon for the present. The weather is simply heavenly. After those three dreadful days in the trenches it seems to have decided to reward us, and we have had the finest weather we've had since coming out: brilliant sunshine by day, cold starlight by night. One couldn't have anything finer. I am sorry Zeppelins are making such a nuisance of themselves. From all descriptions they seem to have been after Woolwich and Enfield, but there is not much excuse for the raids, as far as I can see. You will be very busy getting the house ready now, I expect. I dreamed of it the other night, but I forgot at once what it was like. Is there a bathroom? It's not marked in Dad's plan, and I am wondering where I shall be able to read. We've got another officer in 'B' Company: soon, I suppose, we shall be up to strength again. I haven't much news, but I'd like to thank you at once for the parcel.

Love from ARTHUR.

September, 1915.

My dear Alice,*

How kind of you to write. Don't trouble about leaving me letterless. I knew how busy you were, and I have been kept posted in news from home. I am so glad you have found a good place to live in, and pleasant people. How jolly for the baby to have cows and horses to look at. I have been much pleased by the pictures of her that have come out to me—looking healthier and bonnier than even a baby like that usually appears in photographs. She will be a great person in the district, I've no doubt. I am glad mother will be living near you, or at least within 6*d*. of you. Do you like the house they are taking? I think the description sounds quite good, but I have forgotten all the country round Enfield, and don't think I ever knew the parts between Enfield and Barnet. One question for your ears alone—how can there be roses if there is not a clay soil? Has Dad fallen at last a victim to his old enemy? The war for us is more monotonous than anything else. We had three terrible days the last time we were in trenches—incessant rainstorms, and I had lost

* His sister, Mrs. D. W. Lowis.

my Burberry. I expect, though, that we have had a week's fine weather since as the reward: and finer weather there could not possibly have been, brilliant sun by day and almost frosty starlight at night. Bombs and shells disturb our peace occasionally, and the German bullets now and then find something to hit. But I think we hit more of them. Is everybody at home very distressed and unhappy? The English Press is not what you might call consoling in times like these. It seems to me to want both sense and courage. I don't like these Zeppelin raids. But all the damage done still seems insignificant compared with what they might do. And as for casualties, Armentières, a town of under 30,000 inhabitants, has lost more civilians from shell fire than all England by the raids: not that that makes things any better. Well, I do not think there will be any other European War for a good long while after this. One advantage of going back to the old methods of war, waged by peoples *en masse*, is that practically no one can escape feeling the blows of the war. I cannot help thinking that 1,000,000 German widows will be a strong argument for peace even in a 'militarist' nation. But these are gloomy

thoughts for a letter. I am feeling quite cheerful in spite of everything, and I am looking forward to seeing your new home in the still distant future, when I come home on leave.

My love to you, and my kisses for the fat girl.

ARTHUR.

September, 1915.

MY DEAR MASTER,*

I feel this is the proper way to address you after reading your pamphlet, which seems to me just to settle off these curious I.L.P. critics of Grey. It gave me the same feeling, that it would be wicked to disagree with you, that I used to have when you were teaching me Greek and other things. But I am very sorry to hear that the strain of all the things you have been doing lately has knocked you up. Do please rest and get better, and, above all, don't go out drilling on November mornings in Oxford, a proceeding that could only be justified in your case if the Germans were going

* Professor Gilbert Murray.

to invade us after destroying all our fleet. We are here fairly in a groove—just as much as any of the women who cut their throats for that reason in high-class drama. We spend a week in the trenches, and then a week in reserve, during which we go up to the trenches on working parties. Of late, the working parties have been slightly less arduous than before. Otherwise, all is as it was last month, and as apparently it will be next month. The men were very full a few weeks ago of a supposed rest, to which we were shortly to return; also of leave; also of a coming change of position (sometimes to Ypres, sometimes to the Dardanelles). But none of these things come upon us. The Germans are on the whole very quiet. They have lately been rather troublesome with rifle grenades and trench mortars. Rifle grenades kill you, if they catch you, but generally they don't catch you, and a very small protection keeps them out. Trench mortars are very different—they are capable of breaking down a fairly strong parapet and will blow several men to pieces with great ease. They also fire a sort of super-bomb, which is worse even than a trench mortar. But we also have weapons of destruc-

tion, and a little while ago went for them with artillery, trench howitzers, trench mortars, rifle grenades, and every weapon available. It had a calming effect, and the last week or so has been quite peaceable. The trench howitzer is a funny affair. They conceal it somewhere in a line not too near the enemy, fire it off, and, as soon as it is fired, run for their lives with their weapon hauled along after them. Meanwhile the infantry sit shivering, and wait for the Germans to retaliate. It is always so with guns. It is all very quiet and comfortable here. The guns boom off all day, and sometimes at night, too; but, for all the supposed shortage of munitions, our guns fire more than theirs. We have not yet had any attack, which perhaps explains a proud statement in a letter from one of my men that 'we have never lost a trench.' Our snipers, as I've told you before, I think, are really excellent. They get more or less commanding positions, from which they can get at incautious Germans in the second line, or in the fields behind their lines, whereas the Germans waste a lot of ammunition firing through loopholes at our sandbags. Nobody puts his head up in daylight, and consequently they get very few hits,

though they sometimes smother you with earth out of the cut sandbag. If this happens much, our men get indignant, and fire back at their sandbags with no greater hope than to spoil their dinner for them. The real fun is at night. I am thoroughly used now to crawling about between the lines, and find it much less alarming than to sit tight during a bombardment. About a fortnight ago I had an amusing experience. My Company Commander wanted to sleep at night, and couldn't, because of over-zealous sentries who persisted in firing at nothing. So I went out to have a look round, and meanwhile keep the sentries quiet with the information that someone was out patrolling. Then when I got back my Company Commander insisted on putting it into an Operations Report, for which purpose I had to invent an object for the expedition. The premises had to be revised in the light of the conclusion. I had found a path between the lines—a track barely discernible, and not visible from the trenches at all. So the object of the expedition had to be an examination of approaches from the German lines to ours: you cannot say in an official report that the object of anything you do is to give your

Company Commander sleep. To finish up, I thought our Brigadier certain to ask questions, and, as I didn't know exactly where the track led, I went out again the next night to make sure. I really got to quite as important a result that night. For I didn't tell the sentries to stop firing, and only warned the men in a sap from which I went out. But no shots came near me, a further proof that at night men always fire high—not, of course, that they were aiming at me, for it was a moonlit night, and in any case I had to crawl. Now I have written this, it seems to me more exciting than it really was. As I've said before, it is an easy life here, and, when I get the presents I'm not allowed to thank you for, I feel an impostor —the only exception being when it rains, and the trenches are muddy and flooded. Last time we started with three very wet days, and it was really abominable. They have a terrible time in Gallipoli, but it's something not to have mud. I think this is enough about ourselves. But Lady Mary has just written me a letter, in which she says at the end that she wishes I could come to see you all and tell you not to worry. Well, she can't want me to come and see you more than I want to myself. But,

on the original arrangements for leave, it would take eleven years for the whole Battalion to get leave, and my turn would be late. They have quickened a little since, but, even so, I certainly shall not be home before Christmas. So I will not wait for a visit to tell you one thing which seems to me encouraging, and may help to explain why I certainly don't feel any anxiety myself about the war. I have been reckoning up what numbers the Germans would require to keep up their present strength on the Western front, supposing that their casualties were in the same proportion as our own on this little bit of front my brigade is holding. I do not see how the number could be less than 850,000. To get it even there, I have to assume that there is no fighting—only losses from gun-fire, bombs or sniping, but no attacks and no set battles (in one day's severe fighting, however, a brigade would lose as many as we have lost in two months of the trenches); further, that all the front is as quiet as our own: that there is no sickness at all (though the Germans have enteric, and everybody is bound to have some amount of sickness in winter): and that their losses are not greater than ours, though on this particular bit of

front we know them to be greater. I first worked at the figures when I was writing a letter to Joseph, and had a long dismal working party at which I had to think about something. Since then I've gone over them, and feel more sure than ever about them. They allow, by the way, sixty per cent. of the wounded to return, though not all the sixty per cent. within the same year. On the same basis, I cannot believe Repington's recent estimate of German losses nor the Press Association's: 2,000,000 is much too low, even for their permanent losses. In fact, I think if people paid more attention to arithmetic and less to Russian fortresses they would be much happier. Poor old Grand Duke! I always thought he would retire a long way, but the Caucasus is further than I expected. . . . The retirement after all was not much less annoying to the Germans than to the Russians. Do not reveal my figures and get me court-martialled before my time. But think how Joffre, with all the figures from all the front instead of from about a mile of it, must smile every time he casts up his accounts before going to bed. I suppose the worry at home is the result of not being able to shake off the

newspapers. Between Northcliffe and people like Clive Bell—to judge from last week's *Nation*, you must have a bad time. I have not read Clive Bell's productions, but the passage quoted by Chesterton, about the considerations on which a democratic state shall make war, was not folly, it was wickedness. I don't wonder that, with all the nervous strain of life in England, you need letters from the Front to support you. . . . My love to you all—I would send thanks, too, to Lady Mary, if they didn't make her cross.

Yours ever,

A. G. HEATH.

September 20th, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I've been without papers now for several days, and may have missed the announcement of Cheesman's death in the Dardanelles. A letter from Joseph two days ago sent me the news. . . . The friendship that developed between us made the whole difference to my life in Oxford, since my return. . . . Now I can

hardly bear to think of Oxford without him. . . . Nobody who didn't know him closely knew how great a power of loyalty and self-sacrifice he had, and this is the sort of death he would have chosen, and the sort that seems a fitting end to so strenuous and devoted a life. But I cannot help looking at things from my personal point of view, and the more I think of what I've lost, the more grievous it seems. I don't know how his people will bear it. They were absolutely bound up in him.

I am still in the fort I told you of. We have been shelled mildly twice, but with no casualties. Apart from that, it is very pleasant. Glorious weather—sunrise to-day was rapid and brilliant, with a fine fresh wind blowing, the guns busy on our right, and not very long afterwards the news—I scarcely dare hope yet that it is true—that the Dardanelles have been forced, and that the English had landed in strength at Ostend. The last bit of news, especially, I can hardly credit, for, if true, it must mean a big offensive movement on the Western front for which on all accounts we are not yet ready. The Dardanelles seems more possible—I only hope it is so. Weather like this reminds me of Stretton, and the best

of our reading parties there. I suppose we shall never have another. By the way, that aeroplane fight reported in the papers a few days ago was quite near us. The men watched it all and cheered. This is ideal weather for aeroplanes, though I suppose a bit too gusty to-day. They are all over the place. Well, dear, I expect this is the last letter I shall send to Bromley. The mail was stopped yesterday, and I do not know yet whether it will be clear to-day. In any case, this will not reach you till the 22nd, and on the 24th you move, do you not? If I write in the next day or two I shall probably write to Dad at Somerset House. I wish there was less wrangling at home, and more reliance on the Government. It is useless for anybody outside the Cabinet to attempt to decide whether we need conscription or not, and I am sick of the vague generalities about it one is always hearing. Of course, the misfortune is that the Cabinet, too, is divided. The men I trust myself, absolutely, are Asquith and Balfour. I admire Lloyd George immensely for his vigour and courage, but the much-quoted preface reminded one too much of the *Daily Mail*. I don't see any sign yet that the Russian armies will be

a negligible quantity till next Spring, as he makes out. I certainly thought a month ago that they would be lucky if they escaped destruction. But they do seem to have escaped, and the Germans are forced to carry on the campaign for an almost indefinite time now, or else admit failure. The idea that they have done with the Russians, and now have only the English armies between them and complete victory, may be a good thing to spread in the interests of recruiting—or conscription—but the German Emperor also announced, I think two months ago, that his victorious sword had broken the Russians, and that for a winter they would be useless. Since then he has not been able to withdraw a single German soldier from his defeated enemies—except the sick and wounded. I don't trust Lloyd George on the subject, any more than the Kaiser. I was so interested to hear from Tommy that he has become a hypnotist. It must be great fun. That is the part of medicine I should be most interested in if I were a doctor. When does Janie start her new career? Also, is it King's Cross that one travels to for Winchmore Hill? And is Winchmore Hill the station? Not that it's of any immediate interest to me, for my

leave will not come this year. Still one likes to know about these things. By the way, I hope Bessie will join the Bach Choir. Allen is back in England now, and, if she wants to join, I will write to him and get him to admit her. The chief difficulty would be, I think, time of practice. But if she could manage it, I certainly think it would be worth while. Well, this is all I mean to send for the present. A telescope has just arrived, and I mean to see what I can of a supposed German Headquarters.

With all my love to you,

ARTHUR.

September 20th, 1915.

DEAR JOSEPH,

Thank you for your letter. Either I have missed the casualty list in which Cheesman's name comes, or it has not come out yet. Anyhow, your letter was the first news I had of it. I suppose it is a narrowly personal way of looking at it, but it is the worst piece of news the war has brought me yet. I feel it the more because such close friendship and co-operation

with him was one of the happinesses I had not looked forward to when my Fellowship was offered me. He was senior to me, of course, when we were undergraduates, and we had seldom met, and rather disliked one another when we did meet. So I think we approached one another rather with suspicion when I came back, and, if we had failed to hit it off, I should have had a much troubled four years; for we had the same pupils and the same friends. But our suspicions very soon disappeared, and we had complete confidence in one another, made almost all our plans together, agreed in so many of our tastes and opinions, that the remaining disagreement gave a piquancy to friendship without making it difficult, and generally, as you know, lived together. Each of us had one or two still closer friends, but there was a special kind of comradeship between us which was peculiar to our friendship —it was a thing we always counted on, and made a sort of solid backbone to life in Oxford. I don't suppose anybody but myself, except his actual pupils, knows quite what a magnificent teacher he was; nor how tremendously alive and stimulating his mind was. A scholar's life, in his way of living it, was one

of the most full-blooded things imaginable: the extension of knowledge and the power knowledge brings, a real adventure, instead of a deadening and drying up of the spirit. History was something to which you could reasonably devote your life and powers for him—the difference between his way of looking at it and that of many men . . . incalculable. Before I knew him, I got the impression from undiscerning friends of his that he was one of the people who revelled in useless detail for detail's sake. But it was not so at all. He really took the view that history is a school of politics, and is the only man I have ever met with any power of using history in that way. But his mind was equally capable of the little things and the big. He started with minute researches on the Roman Army, but his ambition was to write a history of the Roman Empire, and I honestly think it would have been the biggest thing done in England on those lines since Gibbon, if he had lived to bring it off. However, it is not so much of his intellectual power I think now. It was the same all round, the more I knew him, the more I admired him. He had strong convictions, and a certain number of equally strong preju-

dices; but he would respect other people's convictions, too, if he thought them sincere, and he never minded your laughing at his prejudices. He had a very high standard for others, but he lived by it himself. And just as he could dislike cordially, so, too, he had the readiest and heartiest appreciation of others, and a loyalty and generosity you only got to know at all fully if you lived with him. My one consolation now is to think that he, of all men, was worthy of a death like this, and it is not using conventional words in his case to talk of it as glorious: what he gave was not given in unthinking excitement, and his last sacrifice only in keeping with his whole-hearted devotion, both to causes and to persons. I hope you will not mind my writing all this to you. I feel I must talk about him to somebody who knew him. I cannot bear now to think of Oxford in the future—Medley gone, Lennard very likely going, and Chug now gone for ever. But it is not of the future I am thinking now—I want to say how much I admired him and prized his friendship.

Yours ever,

A. G. H.

I am in command of a 'fort' just behind the front line. I have been writing this at intervals in the last watch of night—now day has risen, cold, brilliant sunshine, a fresh wind, and on our right the guns hard at work.

September, 1915.

MY DEAR MRS. CAMPBELL,

I feel I must write to you, because we have both lost so good a friend. I've not seen Chug's name in the casualty lists, but I've not seen the papers regularly lately, and I suppose the report which I first got from Joseph is right. I had somehow never thought much of his being taken and me left—at least for the present. As you know, we lived so much together, and possessed one another's confidence so completely, that life without him in Oxford is now barely thinkable for me, and all the eagerness with which I was looking forward to a fresh start there after the war is now turned into pain. . . . Yet I don't regret our last common plan, which was to get our Commissions. I do not forget that you have to bear a still greater sorrow. It is harder than

the task of fighting out here, but I suppose it is something that such sorrow can be qualified as it is for us by pride. And yet—well, I can scarcely bear to think of Oxford now—and while I know what an unreplaceable loss he is as a scholar and a teacher, I think most of how good he was to his friends, and especially to me. We are leading a very regular routine-like sort of existence—a week in the trenches, then a week in 'reserve,' which means that we go up to the trenches continuously in working parties. We lose a certain number of men, of course, all the time, but I think we get our own back. One cheerful thing lately was a voice from the German trenches after one of our trench mortars had been fired into it—'If you want these —— trenches you can have them in October.' So apparently on this front, too, the Germans believe the Kaiser's promise that the war will all be over next month. I hope it will be a proportional disappointment to them when the war doesn't end after all. I'm glad Maurice and Tom are going on with their doctors' work. It will be much better for them to come out here as qualified doctors than to stop half way. It's such a pleasure to me that they are working together, as I think it's

made all the difference to Tom, who is certainly much happier at Guy's than he was before.

My love to you all,

ARTHUR HEATH.

You wrote to me once about whether I would like a portrait of Atkinson.* Of course I would very much indeed, but I don't know Mrs. Atkinson to ask her for it.

About September 25, 1915.

MY DEAR REG,

I write in the real atmosphere. Rumours and counter-rumours, our things packed, our gallant men straining at the leash, and everybody wondering what the next twenty-four hours will bring forth. You will know by the time this reaches you, and it is unkind of me to write before I have anything exciting to say. But then I don't know that I ever shall. Anyway, by the time this reaches you, you'll have some idea of what is—or by then, perhaps, has

* Lieut. L. E. Atkinson, R. Berkshire Regt. Fellow of Hertford College, formerly Scholar of New College. Killed in action, May 16th, 1915.

been—going on. But I'm inclined to think that once the hounds of war have been let loose here we shall have a very rough time, one way or another, for some weeks before settling down to the floods and peace of winter. As for floods, a most heavy and untimely rain-fall has already done its worst.

Now for politics. I agree with you in not finding L. G. lately very convincing. The worst of his method of speaking—all vivid and striking illustrations, but no perspective for them—is that one cannot tell how far the instances are typical. I know quite well that you would find plenty of slackers at the Front, as well as behind it; but whether a general condemnation of us would be fair on that account seems a different question. So, too, doubtless with the unions. On the other hand, speeches like Smillie's, and articles like Cole's in the *Nation* lately, do suggest that the whole labour question is still regarded as though the war didn't modify it, and the comparative advantage of workman over employer regarded as more important than a victory of England over Germany. If you quite definitely think the latter question a good deal more important, it's hard to sympathise with Cole. And, if it

is true that employers have made exorbitant profits, I still can't see that the proper course for the employees at present is to quarrel for a share in ill-gotten gains, and that quite regardless of the effect of their action on the country. On conscription, again, it is most unfortunate that Northcliffe should have supported it, for really there seems to be far more ground for it than you allow. It doesn't seem to me that we must be prepared for anything less than the training and equipping of two and a half million men, in addition to those we already have serving abroad. But if Asquith's figure is not an under-estimate, we can hardly have more than one and a quarter million out of that number already under training; and the rate of recruiting on the same estimate (given the numbers known to have come in by the beginning of the year) must be rather under one hundred thousand a month. If these figures are correct, or anywhere near correctness, I don't see how we can get on without a compulsory levy. Of course, I daresay they are wrong, and, in that case, I should be all the better pleased, but anyway, it seems to me a pure question of arithmetic, like most other things in the conduct of war—or of this war

at least. And I don't see it need commit us to any military policy after the war—a compulsory levy in war needn't mean conscription in peace. The one L. G. idea I think utterly wrong is 'industrial conscription,' my reason being that it would be so very inefficient. Military labour is infinitely slower and less good than civilian, and it needs more supervision. Soldiers only work very well when they are in danger—digging in the open under fire, *e.g.* Ordinarily their work shows the usual defects of slave labour; and that on whatever basis they are enlisted. Reasonably good piece-rate wages would produce much better results. Well, I don't know whether this will shock or please you. But such are the profound results of my meditations on politics. However, when one doesn't know the facts, perhaps meditation is useless. Where is Philip going? The new front on the way to Arras, I suppose. I don't think I shall see him.

My love to you, and many thanks for the letters, which it is always so good to receive.

Yours,

A. G. H.

My best wishes to your people.

September, 1915.

MY DEAR DAD,

I am sending you herewith my love, my best wishes to the new home, a cheque for £10 which will cover, I hope, the premiums and the present for the hall—I hope a jolly one. By the time this comes, you will see that all is by no means quiet on the Western front. I have known for some time that there would be something happening before long, but I didn't know what, and I don't know now. Our own part, as far as I can see at present, is not likely to be exciting, though it may well be laborious. This is really to warn you that, if letters from me cease for a time, it won't mean that I am ill or that I have forgotten you, but that for various reasons I can't get a letter written or can't get it through. This is a very provisional warning. It may well turn out, after all, that, on this bit of front at least, everything will go on as usual. In fact, I'm inclined to expect that myself. But one knows so little. Anyway, do not worry or let mother worry, if there is a long interval without a letter. I have no news of interest. Was there a *Times* obituary notice of Cheesman? The first printed thing I've seen about it was in

Truth, which spoke warmly, but not too warmly, of his position as a Roman archæologist and historian. The weather is most unpleasant, very hot and very wet. But after the glories of the preceding fortnight, nothing else can be expected. Bulgaria, I suppose, is going to confound the prophets, and join Germany after all—bad news, I am afraid. The income-tax will be a heavy burden to you. I rather wish it was going to fall more on those who had real luxuries to deny themselves. . . . But it is something that baby linen is not taxed.

My love to you all,

ARTHUR.

September, 1915.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I suppose I may give away at least this much of our military secrets that we are moving. We are not going far away, and whether we are merely having our promised rest, or are to be used eventually for other purposes, or, after a time, will come back to the same line, cannot be forecasted yet. One may have one's own

opinion. But I remain of the same mind as when I wrote to Dad yesterday, and think that we shall not have an immediate part in the advance. There is no doubt that the movement has already done big things, and I imagine that if the Germans have really been considering an offensive in the Balkans, they will think hard now before making it. Also, if you find the news confusing, or even in parts depressing, there is no harm, I think, in saying that, so far at least, several of our attacks have been merely 'holding attacks,' and only in one place has a big offensive been developed. As to what is coming, we know no more than you, even if it were permissible to say. I can't tell you either how exhilarating it is to feel movement and aggression on this front again. Even if it dies rapidly down, we shall all be the better for it, and I think the German nerves will be considerably shaken. Well, my immediate problem is to decide what to do with all the goods accumulated in our three months' residence in this part of the world. Some things, I suppose, will have to be left behind. However, I think I have had my money's worth out of most of this property, even if it has to be discarded. And we shall

still be close enough for it to be possible, perhaps, to fetch things. But, I say again, a little discomfort is permissible, once given the excitement of movement and change. I did not want to stop all the winter on the same front, looking for ever at the same sandbags and plodding along through the same mud. In a month's time, I daresay, I shall be regretting what I've lost. But no matter, I like the move now. Would you mind sending me a book by General Foch, which is, or was, among my possessions at home. It's called, I think, 'La Conduite de la Guerre.' If I could find time to read it, I should rather like to do so. I may be sending a parcel of books, read and done with, back to home soon. When we've been in reserve, I've had more time for reading than I expected. I think I asked Dad for the announcement of Cheesman's death in the *Times*. It he could let me have it, I should like to see it. I do not know at all how he died yet. Thank you for your letter. It's a big blow, and yet I know I shall feel it more when I get back—not here in this strange life. Well, I feel I'm bothering you for a lot of things at rather an inconvenient time. I do hope you've settled down by now into the new

house, and will enjoy it. Funny to think that, by the time I get home to see it, you will feel as if you have never lived anywhere else.

My love to you,

ARTHUR.

I have written to Allen about Janie and the Bach Choir.

September 26th, 1915.

MY DEAR LADY MARY,

Your letter and parcel arrived just after I had written to Mr. Murray. I'm writing to you to resolve the 'domestic problems.' The answer is easy. I like all the things you send me very much. I like especially the School of Cookery cakes and the adorable tea, which arrived to remind me of the Cherwell, the moors at Goathland, Hindhead, tennis against the most Machiavellian of opponents, and even—though I know you would agree with me in feeling less poetic rapture over this—Sunday afternoon in Oxford. On the knotty problem of shirts, you have given me so many that I am ashamed to let my fellow-officers see

my parcels—and have even presented a shirt to a Major—like giving a bun to an elephant, isn't it? But I would certainly not need them in winter. As for staying where we are, that and all else is doubtful. You will know by the time this gets to you that big things are happening on the Western front. I've known they were coming for some time, but not where or how much. And I don't know yet. I only know that we are all very excited, and think that although our part at first in any case is not likely to be exciting, we may take to our marching boots before it is all over. Well, this is not a good moment, you will see, to cadge for any kind of shirt. So might the problem be left till the international situation has cleared a little? As M. Poincaré has observed, *La France veut vaincre. Elle vaincra*: and, in spite of the well known refusal of the English Government to supply shells, rifles, machine-guns, unmarried men, Harmsworth special correspondents, or any of the other necessities of war, still we, too, must do something. It may be that, by the time this reaches you, all will be over, and we shall go on holding our line in our usual quiet respectable way. But perhaps not. Anyway, I think it is a bad

time to ask for anything fresh, but a very good time to thank you—if you will allow me—for your countless gifts, and to send you my love.

Yours,

A. G. Heath.

October 1st, 1915 (the last received).*

My dear Mother,

Since I wrote last we have been on the trek. I must not tell you where we have come, but, in any case, orders change so rapidly that I don't know whether it would be much of a clue. Up till the present we are safe and sound, though not in very comfortable quarters. The weather has unfortunately been everything that it shouldn't. It is true that leave has started, but I view it still with but little interest, for my turn does not come till about next February. So we must have patience. It is queer, and also interesting, seeing fresh country and a new lot of ruined farms. One day we were well back and it was with positive astonishment that I saw a village with no more than the normal

* A field postcard was received, dated October 4th.

dilapidation of peace. In revenge, the place we have now reached is a mere mass of ruins. There is little news that I can give you, for we have either been standing by or else on the trek for the last week, and though that means a good deal of one sort of excitement —suspense, it means very little that can be conveyed to you at home until we are permitted to put in names. I can tell you one thing, that we are south of the place you knew I was near previously. There is a sort of lull in the fighting news, isn't there? I wonder what is really happening. Rest when once you are settled into the new house. I gather from Margie that it has been a heavy strain on you. So please, dear, take it gently now. Don't send any parcels, please, except one with some more socks, if there are any ready. The weather has started for rain now, and I think wet socks will be the order of the day for a long time yet. I now hear—from Mrs. Campbell—that Denniston* has been wounded : but evidently only a slight wound in the shoulder. Still, he is back in England, and his mother is proportionately delighted. His division did

* Captain J. D. Denniston, of the K.O.S.B., Fellow of Hertford College, formerly Scholar of New College.

extremely well a week ago. Mitchison* has apparently been home on leave. . . . Well, as I say, everything is uncertain now, from the post downwards. So, if you don't hear from me for a time, don't worry, but remember that we cannot always get letters through. In fact, these are the first I am sending for several days, and yours, and one or two others that came in this morning, the first I have had since about Tuesday.

Love to all of you,

ARTHUR.

* Lieut. G. R. Mitchison, Dragoon Guards. Formerly Scholar of New College.

FROM A DUG-OUT IN FLANDERS*

FIRST SUBALTERN:

Here in the low dull marshes the dream that I
love fares forth
To the storm-swept rocks of the Border, the
bleak fell sides of the North;
To the whistling wind in the mountains, a rock-
ledge wet with foam
From a sun-splashed torrent leaping to the
black tarn's cavernous home.

SECOND SUBALTERN:

I also dream of the Border, the wide brave
march of Wales:
Autumn sun on the moorland, autumn's wealth
in the vales:
Heather and blaeberries purpling the fern-
grown sides of the rock,
Where an ancient murmur of battle breaks the
stillness of Caradoc.

* This was found among his things which came home after his death, the sheets being stained and crumpled.

THIRD SUBALTERN:

A fairer land I know
Where the winds of Cornwall blow:
Struggling boats on squally rivers, Cornish cakes and cream for tea:
Summer scented waters plashing
Down the midnight creeklet, flashing
White with the sheen of quick limbs diving in a phosphorescent sea.

THE MAJOR:

Give me, a town-bred sinner,
My bathroom and a dinner,
A stiff shirt and a stall
In a painted music hall:
Pall Mall, where congregate
The wise, the good, the great:
The Exchange, where wealth records
Its fullness is the Lord's:
The Park astir all day
With earls and dukes at play:
The river ashine all night,
Deep pools of coloured light.
Climb your mountains up and down,
But leave me London Town.

Fourth Subaltern:

Where my friend and I once wandered, now again the train shall take me
Through the rich display of Surrey parks asleep contentedly,
Till a sunlit breeze blows gently through my windows to awake me,
And the silence of the downlands is the music that shall meet me,
Green and white and gold their banners waving gallantly to greet me,
When I feel myself near Lewes, near the South Wind and the Sea.

All:

Flanders is a sad land,
A dreary land, a bad land,
Gnats and flies and filthy ditches, broken churches, houses tumbling,
Swampy flats and greasy pavé, sobbing bullets, cannon rumbling,
Fields where day forgets her joy, and the night withholds her rest.
If death's blind lightning fall
On our heads, may England call

Her glad lovers, each man back to the land he
loves the best:
To all one Heaven be nigh,
The mist-driven English sky:
Death's angel on the wing
To each say comforting
'Feel undismayed your home wind blowing,
the wind that bears men West.'

A. G. HEATH.

NEWS FROM THE BATTALIONS

(From *The Queen's Own Gazette*)

6TH BATTALION.

Subjoined is a report of the operations of the 6th R.W. Kent Regiment on October 8th. It describes the attempt to capture Gun Trench—a portion of the front line of trenches held by the Germans. The Battalion had one Company on the left of the part held by the Germans, and one Company on the right. Previous attempts by other units to capture this had failed; in one case the trench was taken, but was given up owing to the fact that the Germans held gun pits immediately in front, and from these bombed the position, and so made it untenable.

It was on this day that the Germans made their general counter-attack, and certainly would have attacked us if these operations hadn't been carried out. The account of this general German attack is described in Sir John French's despatch.

A personal note to one of the officers of the Battalion from one of the Divisional Staff stated that 'the Germans could scarcely have thought such a thing possible after such a bombardment.' He adds that 'at Divisional Headquarters we all have a very high opinion of a Battalion which can play up in the way you did after the shelling you had had.'

A special order of the day was issued by the Divisional Commander.

'The following message from the Corps Commander is published for information:—

> 'The Army Commander wishes me to convey to the 12th Division his appreciation of the attempt made by the Division, especially by the 6th R.W. Kent and the 7th E. Surrey Regiments, to carry the Gun Trench yesterday evening. He considers that they showed fine military qualities in undertaking an attack after sustaining such a bombardment throughout the day.'
>
> '(Signed) E. HAKING, Lieut.-General.'

Copy of report on operations on October 8th:—

'At 12.30 p.m. the enemy bombarded the

whole of our front with guns of all calibres. From 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. the bombardment became intense. They used some lachrymatory shells. This enemy bombardment interfered with arrangements which had been made with regard to our attack on enemy Gun Trench, for as late as 5.10 p.m. it was unknown to us whether our artillery fire had been retaliatory to enemy's shelling or had been proceeding according to programme, *i.e.*, concentration of 6 in. and 8 in. howitzers on this trench and the German trench going E. from it with a barrage of fire. Our shelling of the German trench was to be the basis of operations.

'Moreover, we were out of touch with the other Companies, as all lines had been broken, and insufficient time was left for the proper disposition of our bombers.

'The following order was issued, and reached the last Company at 6.8 p.m. :—"The attack was to be carried out according to arrangements made."

'At 6.16 p.m. two platoons of our right Company, under Captain Margetts, with 2nd Lieut. Yates, advanced from our right Company trench to form the screen. At the same

time a bombing attack was led by 2nd Lieut. M. H. Carré on the German trench.

'The working party from "B" Company, under Lieut. Matthews, which was to consolidate the German trench after the bombing was completed and the trench was evacuated, was extended along the trench in right rear of Gun trench and the communication trench to the German trench, and was fully occupied supplying bombs and ammunition to the bombing parties.

'But it was found that little real damage had been done to the trench by our artillery fire, and that there was strong opposition from bombs and machine guns. Captain Margetts was badly wounded about two yards in front of his parapet, Lieut. A. G. Heath and 2nd Lieut. Yates were killed, and the majority of the two leading platoons were knocked over. Meanwhile the bombers, under 2nd Lieut. Carré and 2nd Lieut. Friend, with a few men, got a footing in the German trench and reached the gun pits in front, but owing to much bombing and superior fire from some machine guns, one of which was high up in our direct front, had to retire.

'It was reported that Germans were collect-

ing in the communication trench. Our artillery were informed of this, and their fire directed from our front trench.

'Our Company on the left of the German trench held its line.

'At 9.45 p.m. Companies took up their lines as they held them prior to the attack.

'At 10.30 p.m. the line became normal. Throughout the night the enemy trenches were shelled.

'There were two main causes of failure to take the trench:—

'(*a*) Full dispositions were not complete owing to the intense bombardment by enemy of our front from 3—4 p.m.

'(*b*) There was insufficient concentration of artillery fire on the trench. This allowed them to hold their line strongly and to hold up our advancing platoons.'

October 16*th*, 1915.

DEAR SIR,

It is with deep regret I have to write and inform you of the death of your son, Lieut. A. G. Heath. He died the death of a true

and gallant soldier, leading his Company in an attack on the German trenches. He is a great loss to the Battalion, and his loss is felt by all. He was absolutely fearless, and was a fine example to his men. He was buried close to where he was killed, about one hundred yards west of what is known as Gun Trench, south of La Bassée. You have the sympathy of all of us.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

S. F. VENABLES, Lt.-Col.,

Commanding 6th Batt. R.W. Kent Regt.

October 22nd, 1915.

DEAR MRS. HEATH,

I have been going to write to you for some time to sympathize with you in your terrible loss. Your son was a very great friend of mine, and his death was a great shock to me and to everyone in the Company. Everyone respected and admired his unflinching courage, and his cool manner under the most galling fire put confidence in all around him. The last afternoon, when one of the heaviest bom-

bardments of the war was taking place, he was walking about talking to everyone as if nothing was happening; and, later on in the evening, during some small operations we were taking part in, he was walking about in the same cool manner in the midst of a tremendous rifle and machine-gun fire until he was hit. I am glad to say he died practically instantaneously, but with one remark which bore out his unselfish character, 'Don't trouble about me.' I only wish you could see some of the letters written by his own men to their homes. I am certain it would make you very, very proud. Your son set an example which it will be hard to copy. We cannot afford to lose men like him, as they are few and far between, and the Regiment has lost one of the very best. I am afraid I express myself very badly, but hope you will understand what I feel myself, and accept my deepest sympathy in your irretrievable loss. I should like to come and see you after this war is over, and tell you a little more, as it is far easier to express in words what it is impossible to do in a letter.

Yours very sincerely,

MYLES L. W. MATTHEWS.

[Captain Matthews was killed in action in July, 1916.]

October, 1915.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Heath,

By the time you receive these few lines, you will already have heard of the sad death of your gallant son. On behalf of the Platoon, I wish to express our sincere sympathy to you in your bereavement. It will console you to know that a braver man never existed. Some few minutes before he met his death I heard the following expression from one of the men, 'What a man! I would follow him anywhere.' These few words express the opinion of everybody who came in contact with him, and we all feel proud to have had the honour of serving under him. I am sure that the example he set us will strengthen us in the future. We shall miss him sadly, but we will do our best to avenge him. Again expressing our sincere sympathy for your great loss,

I remain,

Sincerely yours,

For No. 7 Platoon,

James Kerslake, Sgt.

ADDRESS BY MR. P. E. MATHESON IN NEW COLLEGE CHAPEL, OCTOBER 17TH, 1915

(FOUNDER'S COMMEMORATION, AND MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR LIEUTENANTS CHEESMAN AND HEATH)

I have been asked by the Fellows to say a few words to you to-night. You will all regret with me that the Warden, who would speak to you if he were here, cannot be with us. We pray earnestly for his speedy recovery and return.

We celebrate to-day the memory of William of Wykeham our Founder, a great Englishman, with large ideas and a strong belief in character and education. The lessons of his memory are lessons that we have continually to renew in our hearts and in our lives—first, that man is what his character makes him, that, highly as we may prize intellectual gifts, intellect without character is worse than useless and may become in men and in nations a barbarous and destructive force; and, secondly, that no man can live to himself alone.

In the past fourteen months the spirit of public service which Wykeham's two foundations embody has been illustrated in the lives of hundreds of our members, who have cheerfully and courageously answered their country's call. They have fought and are fighting still for England and for the cause of justice and freedom and good faith among the nations of the world. We have suffered many losses since we last met, and to-night we specially commemorate two Fellows of our Society, who till lately were living and teaching in our midst. Many of you knew and loved them well, and to these I can say nothing they do not know already, perhaps better than I do. To those who did not know them let me say this: George Leonard Cheesman and Arthur George Heath were both Scholars of New College, who returned here as Fellows and Lecturers. Both were men of distinguished ability and high character, who had already given promise of great things in their own departments of study. Differing at many points, they were united by a close and intimate friendship and shared a high ideal of what a College and University should be: illuminating schools of study and research, vital centres for the building up of

character and learning, always in close relation with the forces of national life. Both of them had a remarkable personality and a charm which won upon their friends, and inspired their pupils with a keen and vivid interest that many of them had never known before. Neither of them was a born soldier; but when the call came they did not hesitate, and, being the men they were, they put their full strength into their new calling, and devoted themselves unsparingly to their duties and the men under their command. In the Army, as here, they gave unwearied service, counting well the cost. They have fallen in the battle-field—Leonard Cheesman in the Dardanelles, Arthur Heath in France—within two months of one another. They have left a great gap in the life of the College and of us all; their places can never be filled. We mourn our loss profoundly, but we are proud and glad to belong to the society where such men have lived and worked.

> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast: nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

It was the expressed wish of one of them that if he fell we should not mourn him with sad music, 'as though all were over,' but should

sing a carol of hope and rejoicing. And so, after the March is played, we shall sing the Easter carol* that he loved and chose. If we sorrow it is not with the tears that mean weakness or despair, but with a sorrow that rejoices in the achievements of noble character, and that has faith in the victory of the spirit.

Let us pray that some touch of their spirit may enter into our own lives and into the life of the College, of which they were so large a part—their joy in life and in human things, their loyalty of heart, their high courage, their dutiful service in life and death. The best tribute we can pay to their memory is to carry on the living witness which they have sealed by their death upon the field of battle.

* A Carol to the old Dutch tune of *Hoegroot de vrugten zijn* (1635) published in the Cowley Carol Book.

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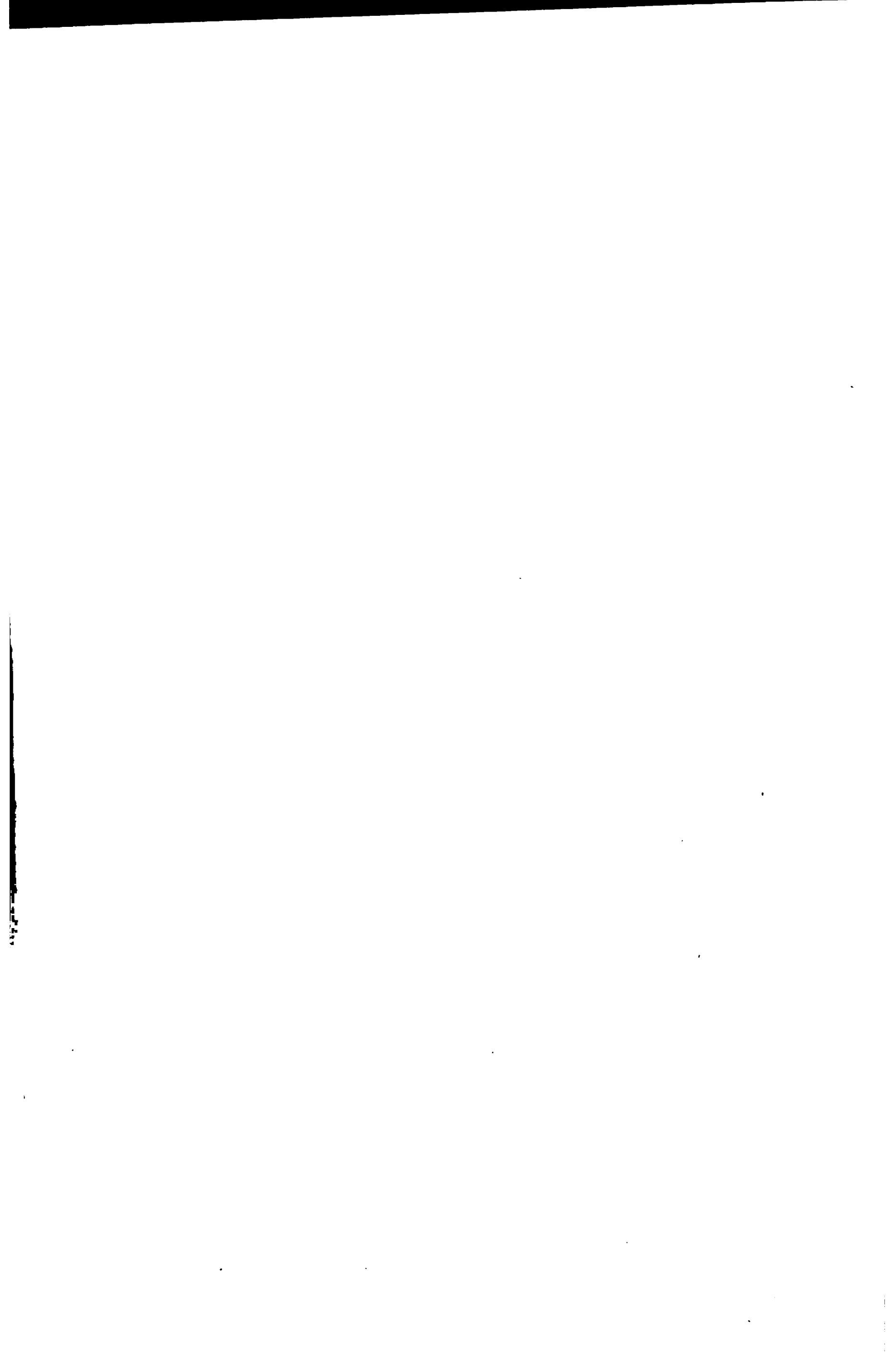

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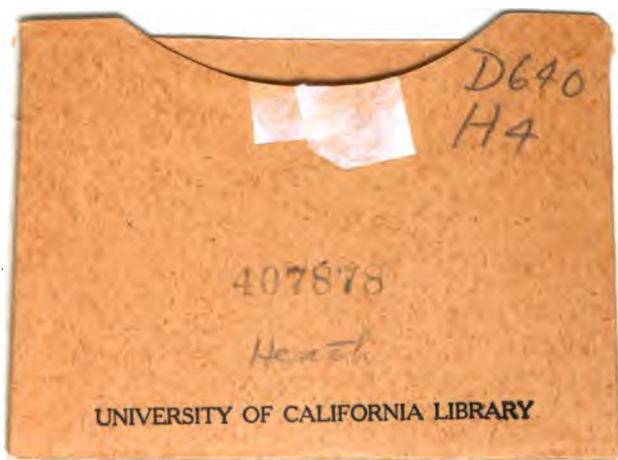
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